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Rob Long on the Debate over Hollywood

NATIONAL REVIEW

THE GAY MOMENT

They're here. They're queer. We're used to it.

BY RICHARD

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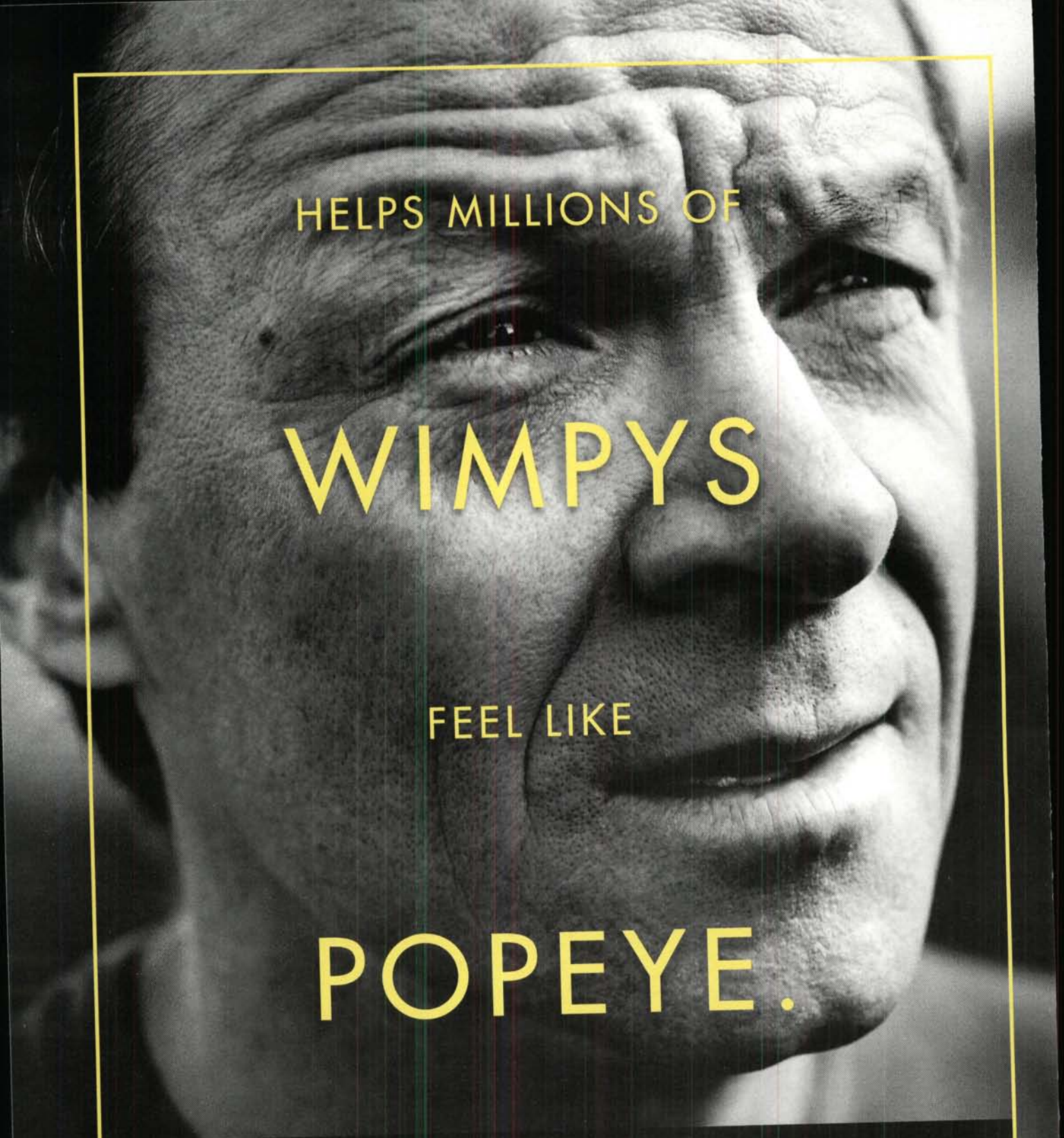

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■ LETTERS ■

THE HOLOCAUST IN AMERICAN LIFE

Elliott Abrams, in his review of my *Holocaust in American Life* ("Genocide on Main Street," June 28), says that my politics "mar" the book. My "unpersuasive discourses about the Cold War" are "reminiscent of CNN's notorious series." I'm not much of a television watcher, so I didn't see the series, but I gather its critics charged that the series saw "moral equivalence" between the parties to the Cold War; thought the conflict the result of a "misunderstanding." As a lifelong anti-Communist, who volunteered for the Army during the Korean War (when Mr. Abrams was in short pants), I find this characterization of my politics grotesque.

Mr. Abrams finds particularly absurd my argument that the Cold War "'led to marginalizing' the Holocaust because the Germans were now our allies." I am flabbergasted that this is argued in NATIONAL REVIEW, of all places. Jewish groups were indeed reticent about discussing the Holocaust in the early Cold War years because of the response to such talk in journals like this one. As I recount in the book, NATIONAL REVIEW described the trial of Adolf Eichmann by Israel as a "pernicious" affair; "an international apparatus of vengeance." The Israeli government was "titillating the world's appetite for horror stories." It was part of "a studied attempt to cast suspicion upon Germany. . . . It is all there: bitterness, distrust, the refusal to forgive, the advancement of Communist aims." Accompanying all of this (for details see the book) was a subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, anti-Semitic subtext.

As I make clear in the book, by the Sixties Jewish anxiety about this kind of response to talk of the Holocaust was waning. But, as I write, the line taken by NATIONAL REVIEW, which persevered longer in responding this way, represented "just the sort of backlash Jewish organizations feared."

Peter Novick
Chicago, Ill.

Prof. Novick is unhappy about my very positive review of his book because I noted his insertion into it of some pretty standard and often irrelevant liberal guff. Even this problem I minimized, leaving it for a late and brief mention in the review; more might have been said. I am pleased to learn that he is "a lifelong anti-Communist" and a Korean War veteran, but George McGovern was an anti-Communist, a World War II bomber pilot—and a liberal.

Prof. Novick's larger point is more interesting. I should not, he implies, have published in NR *my review of his book because almost 40 years ago the magazine took positions he thinks terribly wrong on the Eichmann trial. I agree with him that the magazine's criticisms of the trial were entirely wrongheaded.*

But Prof. Novick knows perfectly well that Jewish groups avoided discussions of the Holocaust in the early Cold War years for many complex reasons. To write now that it was "because of" articles in NR *and "journals like" it is to contradict his own book for the sake of a silly debating point.* —EA

Prof. Novick says that the coverage of the Eichmann apprehension and trial by NATIONAL REVIEW *suggests a "subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, anti-Semitic subtext." Speaking for the editors who wrote the editorials in question, I suggest that any anti-Semitism was so very subtle, only Mr. Novick picked it up. Our colleague Elliott Abrams thinks our analysis wrongheaded. Perhaps he is correct. Rereading our texts, what did we say? (1) That the legal arguments for the apprehension of Eichmann, by agents of a country that didn't exist when the crimes were committed, were ad hoc; (2) that the long drawn out reiteration of the crimes of the Holocaust, in the year 1962, served no purpose ("overfamiliarity with bestiality can dull one's sense of horror. The diary of Anne Frank did more to bring out the horror of Buchenwald than the trial of Eichmann"); (3) that the enemies of a resurgent Germany would opportunize on the trial (said* The New Statesman and Nation, *"It is people like Eichmann who serve first Hitler, and then Adenauer, who are prepared to perpetrate the most hideous crimes against Jews and humanity . . ."); (4) that the Jewish philosopher and theologian Martin Buber might have been correct in worrying that the execution of Eichmann, after a trial by an Israeli court, might be "a mistake of historical dimensions"; and (5) that the "transcendent wrath" against Eichmann was such as to have justified stringing him up, the first chance Israelis, or anybody else, got.* —WFB

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A world of ideas on public policy.

Healthcare Reform: The Real Stakes.

By William C. Steere, Jr.

During the past two decades, all of the industrialised nations have enacted some form of healthcare reform. America is no exception. Just a few years ago, the U.S. was consumed by a vigorous public debate about healthcare. In the end, the debate was a useful one, reaffirming that the U.S. would retain its essentially market-based system. Instead of reform imposed from the top down, the American healthcare system underwent some rather profound self-reform, driven by powerful market forces. The market – not the government – managed to wring inflation out of the private healthcare market.

Today, it appears that U.S. healthcare costs are again on the rise. At the same time, American patients – like patients elsewhere – are becoming more vocal about the restrictions many face in their healthcare plans. Talk of government-led reform is once again in the air.

We must think twice, though, before embarking on "reform" if that means imposing further restrictions on our healthcare markets. The more sensible course is to introduce policies that make the market work better – that is, to the advantage of consumers. I base this argument on our company's decades of experience in healthcare systems around the world, which has given us a unique global perspective on the right and wrong way to reform healthcare. The wrong way is to impose layer after layer of regulation and restrictions. We have seen this approach tried in many countries, and we have always seen it fail – fail to hold down costs, and fail to provide the best quality care. Medicine is changing at so rapid a pace that no government agency or expert commission, however learned, can keep up with it. Only an open, informed and competitive market can do that. This lesson holds true for the U.S. and for all countries contemplating healthcare reform. Free markets do what governments mean to do - but can't.

The right approach is to foster a flexible, market-based system in which consumers have rights, responsibilities, and choices. Healthcare systems do not work if patients are treated as passive recipients of services; they do work if consumers are well-informed about quality, costs, and new treatments, and are free to act responsibly on that knowledge.

Reform should never be driven purely by cost considerations. Instead, we ought to devise new ways of funding healthcare that will make it possible for all patients to afford the best care. Ideally, these new approaches would reward individuals and families for saving and investing in their own healthcare. They would also encourage innovation, which can make healthcare systems more efficient, more productive, and ultimately of greater value for patients.

The path we choose will have enormous implications for all of us. We are in a golden age of science, and no field of scientific inquiry holds more promise than that of biomedicine. Not only can we look forward to the discovery of cures for chronic and acute diseases, but also to the development of enabling therapies that can help people enjoy more rewarding and productive lives. New drugs are already helping people who would once have been disabled by arthritis or cardiovascular disease stay active and mobile. More effective anti-depressants and anti-psychotics are beginning to relieve the crippling illnesses of the mind, allowing sufferers to function normally and happily in society. The promise is – quite simply – one of longer, healthier lives.

What is at issue are the pace and breadth of discovery, and how quickly we can make the benefits of our knowledge available to the patients who need them.

> ***No field of scientific inquiry holds more promise than that of biomedicine***

That is the task of companies like ours. However brilliant the basic research behind a new therapy, it takes the resources and capabilities of a pharmaceutical company to discover, develop and ensure broad awareness of a new medicine.

Therefore, the policy environment the industry will face in the next century may make or break the next wave of biomedical breakthroughs. Will that environment include protection for intellectual property, freedom for the market to determine price, and support for a robust science base? Will healthcare systems nurture innovation, or remove incentives for discovery? Will they give consumers information and options, or impose stringent rules and regulations that limit access and choice? For the U.S., as for the rest of the world, the healthcare debate is by no means over. And for all of us, the stakes are higher than ever.

William C. Steere, Jr., is Chairman and CEO of Pfizer Inc.

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DEMONIZING SERBS

In his effort to justify NATO's seizure from Serbia of its Kosovo province, David Pryce-Jones ("Kosovo, from Scratch," July 12) tries to demonize the Serbs as a people, and does not shrink from making charges that are patently false. His claim that the World War II concentration camp at Jasenovac was "operated by the Serbs" is ludicrous. The camp, as every source I've been able to consult states plainly, was operated by the Croatian Ustasha. While many thousands did die there "on account of their race" the majority of the victims were Serbs.

Such errors aren't made innocently, or at random. They are the product of a propagandist mentality that has dropped all trace of intellectual integrity. Perhaps Pryce-Jones fears that Americans may start to doubt the wisdom of their military's destruction of a country that had never harmed the United States, or become distressed by the thuggery of their new Balkan "allies," the Stalinist KLA. His solution: falsify history in the most egregious manner, paint the Serbs not as victims of the Nazis, which they largely were, but as the most abject of collaborators, a people who run genocidal camps even "without benefit of German help." Maybe no one will notice the falsification, maybe something of the smear will stick, enough so Americans can feel good about killing Serbs even after Milosevic is gone.

Scott McConnell
New York, N.Y.

My purpose in mentioning Jasenovac was to illustrate how mass-murdering has conditioned political life in that unhappy region of the Balkans. Recent events in Kosovo confirm the persistent reality of this general point. Scott McConnell is correct: The Croat Ustashe ran Jasenovac, and Serbs were murdered there along with Jews and gypsies. It is a compliment of sorts that Mr. McConnell judges me so infallible that I cannot make a mistake. It was random, alas, a lapse of concentration. Had he merely corrected me, I should have been glad to make amends. But he goes on to speculate that I must have a hidden conspiratorial agenda to mislead Americans. This reveals a mindset all his own, in which Serbs can do no wrong and their critics are only propagandists. When it comes to deliberately demonizing Serbs, nobody could have done a better job than Milosevic and those of his men who have put into practice his murderous policies in Croatia, Bosnia, and now Kosovo. —DP-J

GOING ON THE RECORD ON SINGER

I write to address an entry in "The Week" (July 12) concerning Princeton University's appointment of Peter Singer to a professorship. It quotes a letter Steve Forbes sent to Princeton spelling out his opposition to Mr. Singer's views. The entry disparages me, as a member of Princeton's board of trustees, for allegedly not taking "the bold step of publicly condemning postpartum baby-killing."

As one schooled in the Hippocratic oath, and as a leader in the fight against partial-birth abortion in the Senate, I would not think it necessary for me to condemn infanticide to prove my commitment to the preservation of life.

Although your unfounded rhetorical challenge on "postpartum baby-killing" did not ask that I make my position on Mr. Singer publicly known, let me quote from a letter I have sent to a number of my Tennessee constituents who have inquired about it:

> As you know, Mr. Singer's appointment has created a great amount of controversy. Like you, I am greatly disturbed by many of Mr. Singer's ideas, especially as they relate to the value and treatment of human life. As a physician, I have always fought to preserve life. I have also been a strong advocate for the rights of individuals with disabilities. I fundamentally disagree with Mr. Singer's positions and beliefs, and have strongly expressed my views on this matter with the administration of Princeton University.

I hope this clarifies my position on Mr. Singer and reiterates what should be an obvious position on "postpartum baby-killing."

Bill Frist, M.D.
United States Senator
Washington, D.C.

For the record, Sen. Frist's office had many opportunities to respond to our inquiries regarding his position on Peter Singer's appointment at Princeton. While we're delighted he's opposed to infanticide, we continue to encourage him to challenge Princeton publicly on the matter. —The Eds.

CLARIFYING STRAUSS

David Klinghoffer writes in the Letters section (June 14):

> In explaining the universe, do we take as our starting point the brute fact of physical existence? Or do we start from our intuition of God? The former approach tends to produce a materialistic cosmology. Leo Strauss identified these two starting points as respectively the Greek and the Biblical. So at the root of materialism, which plagues us today more than ever, we find the ancient Greeks. At least our respect for them, I argue, should be tempered by that fact.

Mr. Klinghoffer has misunderstood Leo Strauss. According to Strauss, the materialism that plagues us today is that of modern philosophy, beginning most notably with Machiavelli. Classical political philosophy, beginning with Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, is no more materialistic than the Bible. Intuition of God, or of the Divine, is equally central to the classics. There is however a difference concerning the ultimate understanding of the Divine: whether it leads finally to the obedient love of God, or the unfettered cultivation of human reason. In the latter pursuit, there could be no articles of faith, or sacerdotal authority, to interdict philosophical inquiry. But neither was there any assumption that the conclusions of thought and the conclusions of faith would be inherently contradictory. Indeed, there is every reason to believe that the classics and the Bible are as one in directing man's life towards transcendent truth and in opposing the grounding of man's life on the brute facts of physical existence.

Harry V. Jaffa
The Claremont Institute
Claremont, Calif.

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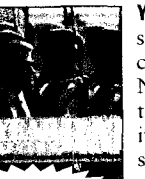

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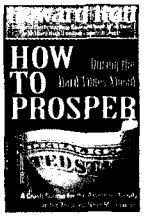

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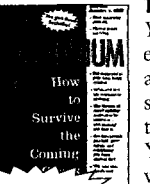

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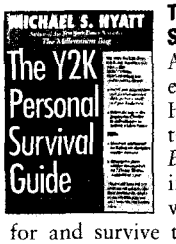

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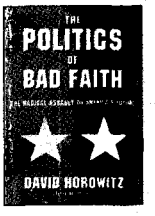

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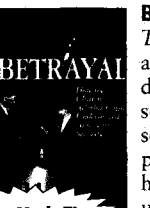

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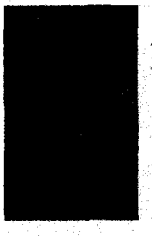

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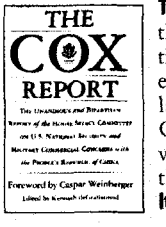

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■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ As **Hillary Clinton** shops for housing in New York, President **Clinton** attends Democratic fundraiser featuring **Eugene O'Neill** play *The Iceman Cometh* on Broadway. Lines from one character's speech in last act: "I'd see in her eyes how she was trying not to know, and then telling herself even if it was true, he couldn't help it, they tempt him, and he's lonely, he hasn't got me, it's only his body, anyway, he doesn't love them, I'm the only one he loves. . . . She forgave me even when it all had to come out in the open. You know how it is when you keep taking chances. You may be lucky for a long time but you get nicked in the end." . . . In wake of Vice President **Al Gore** tardily describing Clinton's behavior in Lewinsky affair as "terribly wrong," White House official tells *New York Times* about presidential reaction: "He is expressing how hurt he is and his dismay at the vice president. It is not a passing thing. He is very upset." . . . Hart-Teeter poll: 65 percent rate Clinton's "values and standards" as "weak" or "deplorable."

■ Star of Budweiser commercials, "Louie the Lizard," is better known than Gore among kids ages 2 to 17, according to University of Pennsylvania survey. . . . **George W. Bush**: "I've got a lot to learn. But should I be fortunate enough to be elected, I'll be ready." . . . Bush plans campaign autobiography, schedules Nov. 20 release date. . . . **Steve Forbes** names **Alveda King**, niece of **Martin Luther King Jr.**, as national co-chairman of campaign. . . . **Dan Quayle** proposes extending child-care tax credit to mothers who stay at home with kids: "Every mother is a working mother. The term 'working mother' is redundant." . . . **Pat Buchanan** downplays speculation he might bolt GOP for Reform Party. . . . Buchanan advisor **Lyn Nofziger** on Sen. **Orrin Hatch** (R., Utah) running for president: "Hatch is a tool of George W. Bush. He picks up the Mormon conservative vote that otherwise would go to Pat and **Gary Bauer**." . . . New York mayor **Rudy Giuliani** has given $1,000 to **Elizabeth Dole**'s and **John McCain**'s campaigns, and $500 to Bush. . . . New Hampshire passes law allowing primary to be held in 1999, if necessary, to maintain first-in-nation status.

■ House appropriators continue to run wild. Minority whip **Tom DeLay** and Speaker **Dennis Hastert** specifically order Rep. **Ralph Regula** (R., Ohio) to keep his bill funding Interior Department within spending caps. Regula busts caps anyway. During closed-door confrontation over spending bills, not one Republican joins DeLay in demanding more restraint. . . . In Fox News poll, voters say GOP "would do a better job on" foreign policy, reducing crime, providing moral leadership, and keeping taxes down. Democrats lead on Social Security, education, and gun control. Parties tied on "maintaining strong economy." . . . Republicans raise $9 million at dinner to benefit House and Senate races next year. . . . GOP fundraisers begin to take advantage of Hillary Clinton's pending candidacy. "We must rid ourselves of the Clintons once and for all," says Alabama GOP chairman **Winton Blount**, who promises to deliver a portion of all contributions to New York Republicans.

"Please let some of the national budget surplus fall my way."

■ Former labor secretary **Robert Reich** flirts with running for Massachusetts governor, but tells friends he isn't serious. . . . National Education Association awards Hillary Clinton its highest honor. Says NEA president **Bob Chase**, "Hillary is a unique woman and a national treasure.". . . Ohio legislature revives school-choice plan, previously blocked by state supreme court on technical grounds. . . . Planned Parenthood Federation of America launches boycott of Wal-Mart stores for refusing to carry Preven, the first "emergency-contraception" kit marketed in the U.S. Wal-Mart calls it a purely "business decision." . . . House passes bill to bar states from imposing extra taxes on workers from other states, and another making it illegal to transport minors across state lines for abortions, bypassing parental-notification laws.

■ *George* magazine asks **Daisy Fuentes**, host of *America's Funniest Home Videos*, to name book she would make required White House reading if she were president: "*Witness*, by **Whittaker Chambers**, because it speaks against the evils of Communism." . . . Massachusetts's highest court permits parental visitation rights to gay couples who break up. . . . Number of men acknowledging children born out of wedlock triples since 1992, owing to law asking for declarations of paternity in hospitals.

■ In forthcoming book, former Israeli prime minister **Benjamin Netanyahu** will say Clinton double-crossed him by promising release of convicted spy **Jonathan Pollard** and then reneging at Wye summit, according to *Yediot Ahronot*. . . . Outgoing foreign minister **Ariel Sharon**: "In the framework of a future arrangement with the Palestinians for solving the problem of refugees, the Arab states will have to compensate some 1 million Jews who fled and left behind their property." . . . China plans test launch of unmanned space capsule to commemorate 50th anniversary of Communist rule in October, and may be ready for manned flight by spring. . . . Foreign ministers of UK and Cuba hold highest-level talks since **Fidel Castro** came to power.

■ Signs seen on Hillary Clinton's recent swing through upstate New York: "Carpetbagger, go home!" and "Go back to your village." **NR**

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THE WEEK

■ Minnesota governor Jesse "The Body" Ventura wants former senator Lowell Weicker to be the Reform Party candidate for president. Only if you can body-slam Weicker's ego, Jesse.

■ A new bipartisan "Battleground 2000" poll is showing a distinctly Republican trend in public opinion in the wake of impeachment. Voters are now evenly split on the question of which party should control Congress and lean toward the GOP for the presidency. While Clinton's job-approval numbers are still high, support for him has become much less intense, particularly among older and independent voters. More than 50 percent of the public strongly disapprove of him personally. Only 36 percent believe the country is moving in the right direction, a sentiment that, given conditions of peace and prosperity, no doubt reflects the quality of Clinton's leadership. Also telling is that on the question of "ethics and honesty," on which the parties were tied in 1996, congressional Republicans now hold a 19-point advantage. A Democratic analysis states that the prominence of "values" among voters' concerns is "the worst news in the poll for Democrats." Supporters of impeachment have had to tell themselves that constitutional virtue is its own reward. But other payoffs may be in store.

■ Republicans should be grateful to Steve Forbes for "going negative" against Bush; even Bush's supporters should welcome a real primary race that keeps him on his toes. But if Forbes wants to run as the candidate of ideas, his attacks will have to be intellectually serious. He has raised the question of whether Bush did "anything illegal" to get into the National Guard during the Vietnam War, although the *Los Angeles Times* found no evidence he had. (Forbes himself spent the Easter Offensive in the New Jersey National Guard.) Forbes has also charged that Bush broke a pledge not to raise taxes "by proposing 75 tax increases" in Texas in 1997. But those tax increases were part of a tax reform that cut taxes overall. Bush's reform can reasonably be criticized: His plan would probably have made it easier to raise taxes in the future. But by the standard Forbes uses against Bush, he himself is a huge tax-raiser, since he wants to repeal most tax breaks. Surely Forbes can come up with a better, more honest attack.

■ Sen. John McCain has taken his campaign-finance crusade to Republican primary voters. He wants a ban on so-called soft money (unregulated contributions to the parties) and independent expenditures (advertising by advocacy groups during a campaign). In a sign that he is making headway, Elizabeth Dole, Gary Bauer, Pat Buchanan, and George W. Bush have all endorsed a soft-money ban. In exchange, however, Bush wants to end the current $1,000 limit on "hard money" contributions directly to candidates. (Even with this constraint, he has raised a whopping $36 million.) This may be a reasonable compromise: Once the hard-money limits are lifted, most of the rationale for soft money disappears. But advocates of campaign-finance reform are working from two noxious premises: 1) that there is "too much" money in the political system. In fact, political contributions are a way for individuals and interests to have their say. And 2) that there is "good money" and "bad money." Soft-money contributions are no more corrupting that any other contributions. The logic of the McCain position would lead to a ban on *all* contributions and the advent of taxpayer-financed campaigns. The senator laments that "the people whom I serve believe that the means by which I came to office corrupt me." If that's the case, there's a solution already available to Arizonans—vote him out of office.

■ The First Lady wants to make a lateral career move, to junior senator from New York. How should she account, it is asked, for all the political prospecting trips she has taken on the federal government's nickel? Less important than the details of her case is the larger issue: the Praetorization of the presidency. As the office grows in power, prestige leaks to spouses, family members, and cronies. An apparent historical parallel in fact highlights the transformation. John Quincy Adams was the son of a president, but he rose to office only after years of nimble politicking and hard work, and when he left the White House he went back into the arena to run for Congress. Bill Clinton spills his aura on his tyro wife, so that she may represent a state she has never lived in. An Adams might wonder whether we traded one royal family for a clutch of them.

■ President Clinton agreed to sign a bill reining in lawsuits over the Y2K problem, which is good news for high-tech firms and the economy that increasingly depends on them. But why should it take a one-time crisis to win a moment of sanity in our liability law, recognized the world over for its excesses? Congress has passed fixes for particular groups before—one of them paved the way for the recent revival of small-plane manufacturers. But each fix leaves everyone else facing the same litigious environment as before, minus important allies and some popular examples of the need for reform. Out-of-control litigation is an ongoing fiasco, and one that will linger long after the year 2000.

■ Having spent the early Nineties railing against a health-care system that leaves too many Americans uninsured, Democrats have spent the last few years working to price even

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SERB DOUBTS

Living in cross hairs of NATO

by Justin Brown
Special to The Christian Science Monitor

BELGRADE, YUGOSLAVIA

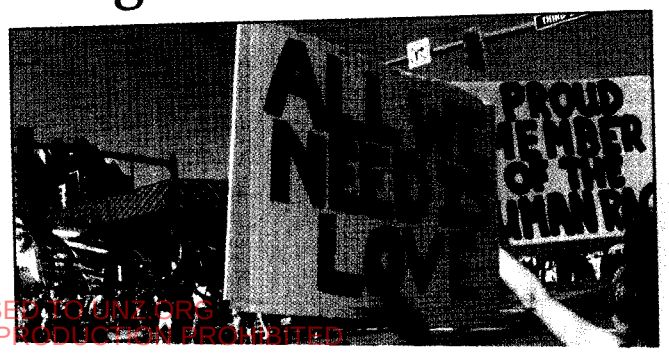
WHEN an earthquake hit northern Serbia last week, the people of Belgrade thought it was the Big One – not a natural disaster, but the bomb attack NATO had been threatening after seven months of violence down in Kosovo.

Idaho Battles Image as Haven for Hate

A white-supremacist group marched here July 18. State has most hate groups per capita.

by Brad Knickerbocker
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

COEUR D'ALENE, IDAHO– When someone says "Idaho," do you think: "First state with a Jewish governor; first state where a native American won statewide office; fourth state to allow women the right to vote; first state to pass the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)?"



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Constabulary Duty

Cops, Keystone or flatfooted, are
What every jumpy Kosovar
Wants on the block by Ramadan:
When wives head for the hair salon
Or shop downtown Pristina, they
Risk being potted on the way—
But Bill and Tony both forgot
Patrolling's a policeman's lot.

—W. H. von Dreele

more workers out of the insurance market. That would be the effect of the "patients' bill of rights," a set of regulations on managed care being debated on the Hill. As a result of the Democrats' bill, an estimated 150,000 fewer women would receive breast exams each year. The Democratic strategy on health care increasingly appears to be to wreck the private insurance market so that the federal government can rush into the breach. Unable to prevail in 1994 with the argument that America was facing a "health-care crisis," the Left has settled for the second-best option: creating one.

■ The Center for Military Readiness reports that the Navy is testing the feasibility of female sailors on submarines. Although the Navy denies it has any plans to make submarines coed, its secretary, Richard Danzig, explained the rationale for such integration in a June lecture to retired submariners. He said that "this segment of the Navy" is—"Narcissus-like"—"in love with [its] own image . . . as a white male preserve." The submarine force could continue to perform "splendidly" without women in its ranks, he allowed, but with women increasingly powerful in Congress, it could wind up receiving "less and less support." At least submariners now know not to expect much courage under fire from their superiors. (Why die for Danzig?)

■ Each year Congress toys with revoking China's most-favored-nation trade status—though the growth of markets has been arguably the most liberating influence in Chinese history. The sophisticated case for revocation goes like this: With Beijing dependent on economic performance for its legitimacy, and China's economic performance dependent on exports to the U.S., the regime would have to bow to American demands. But since Congress is likely to balk at actually imposing severe trade sanctions, simply changing China's trade status would be largely a symbolic gesture; and creating instability for its own sake in China would not necessarily lead to more pacific behavior by the regime, at home or abroad. If Congress is tempted to revoke China's MFN status, a good share of the blame must go to Bill Clinton, who has taken (illegal) campaign contributions from Chinese officials and ignored Chinese spies. Faced with abject appeasement, and unable to force the administration to take a tougher line, critics are turning to trade sanctions as the handiest lever. We saw a similar confusion in the waning days of the Carter administration, when an impotent president was reduced to boycotting the Moscow Olympics. Wishful thinking is not a policy—for the administration or its critics.

■ Two years after the Union Jack was lowered over Hong Kong for the last time, it is clear that Hong Kong is no longer British. Less clear is whether it can claim it is no longer a colony. Hong Kong's Basic Law contains a provision granting the right of abode to mainland children of Hong Kong residents. When a court recently irritated the Hong Kong government by interpreting that right liberally, the government responded by requesting a final ruling from Beijing, which is likely to overrule the court. The outcome, however, is secondary to the terrible precedent set: Beijing's control was supposed to end with foreign and defense policy. Now Hong Kong's own government is inviting the progressive reduction of its own freedom.

■ It became clear earlier this year that North Korea had broken its end of a 1994 deal to forgo nuclear weapons in exchange for massive Western aid, including an expensive civilian nuclear reactor. The administration responded with—more offers of aid. North Korea expressed its gratitude by test-firing new long-range missiles near Japan, selling similar missiles to Iran, and sending submarines filled with saboteurs to South Korea. The administration's latest overture has been to send former defense secretary William Perry to Pyongyang to offer still more goodies if North Korea will only moderate its policies; North Korea's latest moves have been to send a torpedo vessel into South Korean waters, detain a South Korean tourist and an American civilian, and brazenly promise new ballistic-missile tests. North–South "reconciliation" talks have broken down. The North Korean regime will not moderate because its official ideology is paranoia. Too bad the administration seems bent on demonstrating that this paranoid has no enemies.

■ Patrick Magee will be remembered as the man who almost succeeded in killing Mrs. Thatcher when she was prime minister. An IRA terrorist, he placed a bomb in the Brighton hotel where she was staying during the Conservative-party conference in 1984. Though sparing her, the explosion killed a member of Parliament and four others. Still more persons were crippled. Magee was sentenced to prison in 1986 for a recommended minimum of 35 years. In court, he gave the clenched-fist salute and shouted, "Our day will come." His day is here. The present prime minister, Tony Blair, is determined to pursue a "peace process" in Northern Ireland. Accordingly, Magee has been unconditionally released, having served less than half the recommended sentence. Donald Maclean, a former Scottish Conservative, is one whose wife was killed by Magee's bomb. It took her five long weeks to die. The page has been soundlessly turned on her and the other victims. It was left to Mr. Maclean to object to

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Magee's early release, saying, "It is totally wrong." A sentence handed down by the law, he added, should stand. Magee did great damage to Britain and the due processes of a democratic society; Blair has now done his share, too.

■ Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak has formed a coalition government of seven parties. This is a mind-boggling feat in itself. Barak's own party, once called Labor and now misleadingly known as One Israel, won a rather humble 26 of the Knesset's 120 seats, which altogether are shared, or rather fragmented, among 15 parties. To get the other parties on board, Barak had to offer them so many ministerial posts that his own party feels deprived of the spoils, and is already complaining hard. The best option for Barak would have been to cut a deal with Likud, now the main opposition party. Likud's 19 seats were still not enough to give him a majority, but at least Barak could have claimed to have the outline of a government of national unity, with a wide mandate to address identity disputes among Jews, and political and territorial disputes with Arabs. Likud wouldn't buy whatever was on offer. Before Israelis are able to make peace with Arabs, they have to be at peace with themselves.

■ Some 100 prominent Poles have formed a committee to rechristen one of Warsaw's central squares "Reagan Square." In this they show a splendid sense of history, and of gratitude. The committee's honorary chairman is Marian Krzaklewski, head of Solidarity, who says, "Reagan was the main author of the victory of the Free World over the Evil Empire." NR's old friend and contributor, Radek Sikorski, now Poland's deputy foreign minister, is chairman of the committee. The square in question is currently called "Constitution Square," and the constitution it refers to is the bogus, Communist one of 1952. Reagan Square would join plazas named after George Washington and Woodrow Wilson. Obviously enough, we wish the committee well.

■ While the debaters debate the pros and cons of research on human embryos, the horses are streaming out the barn door, as witness this ad from the June 18 issue of *Science*: "HUMAN EMBRYONIC AND FETAL TISSUE. . . . Tissues can be supplied from most gestational stages and from normal or abnormal specimens. . . . Immediate processing. . . . Tissues shipped nationwide by overnight air . . ." Modern textbooks routinely hold the American past up to scorn by reprinting ads for runaway slaves. At least the overseers did not perform experiments on their chattel.

■ Who is Matthew F. Hale? He is the obscure leader of the World Church of the Creator, a white-supremacist "religion" that caught the attention of Benjamin Smith, the gunman who killed two people and wounded eight in a racist rampage across Illinois and Indiana. Hale says he counseled Smith to be nonviolent, though evidently not forcefully enough. Who is Al Sharpton? He is a preacher, media star, candidate in Democratic primaries, and speaker at Harlem protests against Freddie's Fashion Mart, a white-owned store that was torched and shot up by one of Sharpton's auditors. Sharpton never counseled violence either. The world just seems to be full of bad listeners.

■ Pundit Carl Rowan is suing his former newspaper, the *Chicago Sun-Times*, for unfairly shoving him aside. For 32 years Rowan's syndicated column has advanced pedestrian liberal arguments in dull prose. Some people have a taste for that kind of thing, which would explain why he got hired in the first place. But others do not, which is an adequate reason for letting him go. Rowan's suit, however, alleges that he was dismissed because of his race, age, and ideology. At least Rowan is leaving upholding the same principles he advanced in his writing.

■ The *New York Times*'s Bob Herbert is a liberal columnist who should loan his work habits to Carl Rowan. Herbert reports stories, calls up average people, gets quotes. His arguments are still pedestrian, though. In a recent look at unhappy Republican conservatives, he told them to cheer up, since the GOP is still "the party of the mega-corporations and the ultra rich." This is not even smart enough to be wrong. Many of the unhappy GOP conservatives—Gary Bauer, Pat Buchanan—want the party to do less for corporations and taxpayers. They and their partners in dissent—Alan Keyes, Sen. Bob Smith—are primarily motivated by the party's failure to do enough on moral and social questions, chiefly abortion. Even tax-cutter Steve Forbes has been giving equal time to the issue of partial-birth abortion. Herbert should call up some conservatives, if only to denounce them more accurately.

■ The movie *South Park* is sweeping the country. It is fresh, zany, uproariously funny—also an insidious piece of work. The movie is so foul that one can hardly hint at its foulness. It also blares a thesis: that objections to vulgarity in movies or on television are fascist—really, un-American. *South Park* bills itself as the ultimate in political incorrectness, and, given that it offends just about every group, it probably is. But one of its aims is to shame us into silence about what we rightly condemn as the coarsening of our culture. *South Park* prides itself on being daring; even more daring is to criticize and warn

Gore Looks Troubled

Tipper calls him Sexy Al.
Clinton's hopping mad.
Bradley's getting uppity.
Kerrey is a cad.
At the first turn, W.
Races like Ben Hur.
Videos of Buddhist nuns
Sit there, set to whir.

—W. H. von Dreele

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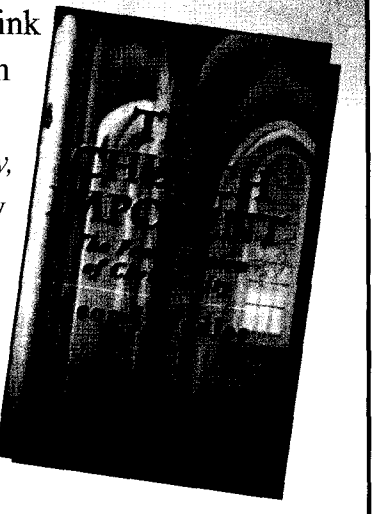

" 'Male and female he created them.' Leon Podles reminds us of the full meaning and mystery of these words, which have been forgotten in our time, when both sexes have been debased and turned against each other by ideologies of 'feminism,' 'liberation,' and 'sexual freedom.' *The Church Impotent* explains the divine harmony between true patriarchy and true femininity as created by our heavenly Father. We can only be grateful for Dr. Podles' lucid effort to repair our understanding of Christian truth."

— ***Joseph Sobran***
Nationally syndicated columnist

"By documenting and criticizing the long-term feminization of Western Christianity, Leon Podles has written a major book — one that has identified a fundamental challenge for the Church in this coming century, namely how to bring men back to the Faith. Church leaders ignore this challenge only at great risk."

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against it. Our tongues are untied: The movie is a firecracker, yeah—it is also an abomination.

■ Mario Puzo taught two somewhat contradictory worldviews. He was a pop Machiavelli, whose godfather-princes employed cunning, self-interest, and violence to survive and flourish. At the same time, he mined nostalgia for loyalty and tradition, writing of the mob as if it were one of Burke's little platoons. Both attitudes were unfashionable among cultural guardians (the first too harsh, the second too sentimental). Yet Puzo's books sold millions of copies. It didn't hurt that he was a great storyteller. He sleeps, not with the fishes.

■ Timothy Leary's newly released FBI file reveals that the apostle of LSD turned on, tuned in, and talked to the feds. In 1970 members of the radical Weather Underground helped Leary escape from the prison where he was doing time for drug possession, and flee the country. After he was re-arrested in 1973, he told the FBI who had helped him. "I want to get out of prison as quickly as I can," Leary said then. Douglas Rushkoff, his friend and literary agent, says now that he just "wanted to be a productive member of society." Mr. Hoover would have understood.

THE BUDGET

Wretched Excess

THE Clinton administration has confirmed that the federal government is likely to take in almost $2.9 trillion more in taxes than it will spend over the next 15 years—and maybe rack up even bigger surpluses. Contrary to appearances, this is not good news. It means that Americans are paying much more in taxes than they should. These excessive tax revenues will make it harder to trim spending. Already the big spenders in both parties are saying that the spending caps adopted in an era of scarcity are obsolete in the new era of abundance. Nobody is pointing out that there are reasons to limit government quite apart from its cost—and so far only Stephen Moore is explaining that the allegedly draconian restraints already allow for record levels of social spending (page 17).

The temptation for conservatives in Washington is to imagine that they can now accomplish all their priorities without the hard work of blocking liberal initiatives: that Congress can cut taxes, increase defense spending, and finance a transition to a more free-market Social Security system and at the same time accede to liberal demands for, e.g., an expensive new program to subsidize the purchase of prescription drugs. Off in the distance can be heard the siren song of a big bipartisan deal, which will likely grow louder in coming weeks.

But such a deal carving up the surplus would be unlikely to advance conservative goals. The surplus will not make it easier to reform Social Security, for one thing, if it leads people to believe that the program is solvent. (Never mind that the program would in any case remain a rotten deal for workers.) And it is a mistake to underestimate Congress's ability to spend the whole surplus. Even before the new revenue estimates, the heads of the appropriations committees—the people in charge of spending the money—had been asking for an extra $30 billion to avoid spending cuts for next year. But since spending cuts are not going to get any easier, that $30 billion would have to be repeated each year. So there, right off the bat, goes $300 billion of the ten-year surplus.

Congress's demonstrated inability to reduce spending is one reason that conservatives should not allow themselves to be distracted by the notion of paying down the federal debt. Debt repayment is preferable to social spending, but it would be prudent to keep the money from coming to Washington in the first place—by cutting taxes. Tax cuts (and a reform of the budget-writing process) are probably the only realistic way to achieve spending restraint.

As it stands, tax increases are enabling federal profligacy. High taxes are a byproduct of prosperity: More and more Americans are rising into higher tax brackets. Some liberals have taken to arguing that this "real-income bracket creep" is no problem, because individual taxpayers still come out better. But there is no reason that government's share of the economy should grow automatically and unlegislated. Congress should pass substantial tax cuts—including a widening of the lowest tax bracket and a liberalization of IRAs—and then index the tax brackets to prevent further creeping.

The public does not clamor for a tax cut, comes the inevitable objection. But as poll-watcher Karlyn Bowman of the American Enterprise Institute suggests, the polls are best understood as reflecting a lack of public confidence that taxes *will* be cut—a skepticism dating back to 1990, when President Bush broke his tax pledge. Democratic pollster Celinda Lake recently wrote, "The Republicans reinforce their advantage on bringing prosperity when they talk about taxes." But if tax-cut talk is only that, people understandably place a higher priority on getting new benefits.

And what's the political alternative to starting a fight over taxes? A risky budget deal. A deal that met Democratic spending demands would help Al Gore deliver favors to various constituencies; if it also cut taxes modestly, it would be harder for his opponent to make the case against him. Dragging down the Republican presidential candidate in this manner would hurt congressional candidates more than any reputation for "working together to get things done" would help them. Besides, congressional Republicans need to present a clear, attractive choice more than they need to refute the "do-nothing" charge. Which means: tax cuts, and no deal.

TERRORISM

Ocalan Condemned

THE death sentence passed on Abdullah Ocalan, leader of the Kurdish rebels in Turkey, has provoked an outcry easy to predict. All over the world, the great and the good have no trouble forgiving wrongs done to others and not to themselves.

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Ocalan, it is argued, should not have been charged with treason, which in Turkey carries a mandatory death sentence. He was kidnapped abroad, in breach of international law. The trial took place in a security court. Ambiguously, Ocalan himself expressed a degree of remorse but threatened that his execution would unleash total violence.

It is 15 years since Ocalan started armed rebellion against the Turkish state, and in that time an estimated 25,000 armed Kurdish guerrillas have been killed, as well as some 5,000 Turkish soldiers and roughly the same number of Turkish civilians. Successive Turkish governments were able to argue that Ocalan and his tactics justified harsh repression of all 10 million or more Kurds in the country, and further denial of their human rights. But the issue did not involve the straightforward persecution by the majority of a peaceful and united minority. A committed Marxist and Communist, Ocalan had long offered himself as Moscow's willing tool to destabilize its southern neighbor, the loyally pro-NATO Turkey. Many, probably most, Kurds regretted the horrible predicament in which this self-appointed leader had placed them. We must hope that his arrest and trial puts paid to another bloody chapter of the Cold War.

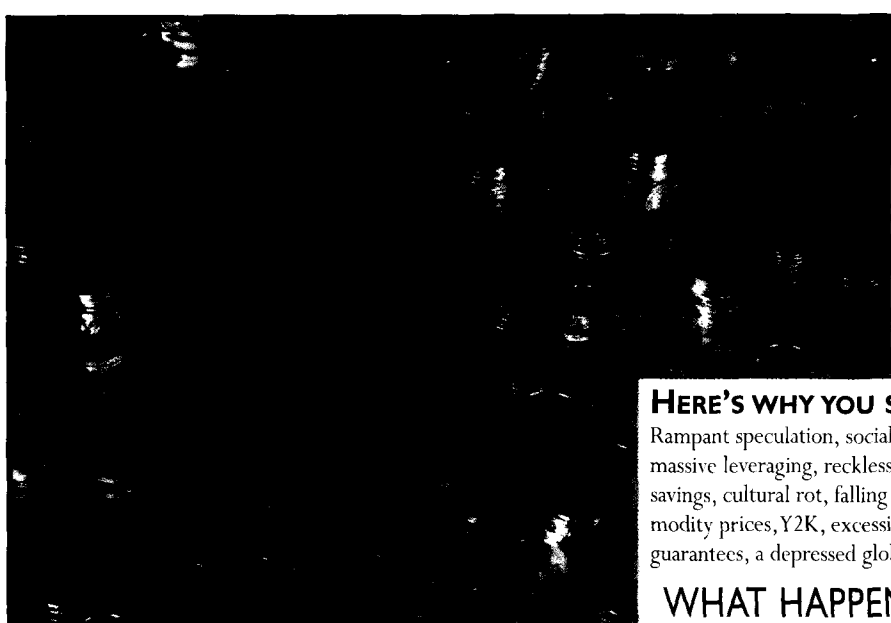
A lengthy process of appeal now follows, in Turkish courts and possibly in the European Court of Human Rights as well. Turkey aspires to join the European Union, and Ocalan's execution would definitively exclude such an outcome, according to a chorus of European leaders. The death of someone convicted of treason, then, might have the unintended and ironic consequence of saving the Turkish state from irrevocable loss of the sovereignty for which it fought so long and so hard.

CULTURE WATCH

The Altar, Stood Up

WAITING tactfully until June, the favorite month of wedding planners and bridal photographers, had passed, the National Marriage Project at Rutgers University announced that fewer people were marrying, and fewer were happy with their marriages than ever before. The marriage rate has dropped by two-fifths since 1960; despite ample opportunity to get it right a second (or third) time, the number of people who describe their marriages as "very happy" has declined slightly since the early Seventies. The news comes at a time when other social indicators have been improving (abortions, illegitimacy, and the divorce rate are all slightly down). Hold the celebrations: The institution of marriage, say the study's authors, is in "serious trouble."

As always, the headline statistics conceal complications. The number of married blacks has fallen far more precipitously than the number of married whites (a decline of about one-third since 1960 for blacks versus a decline of about one-seventh for whites). All the veterans of the Moynihan wars can have another go-round over the meaning of this disparity. Still, even the drop in the number of married whites is substantial.



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Another hidden surprise: The slight drop in the number of "very happy" married people masks a sharp fall in the number of people in "very happy" first marriages.

Marriage, say the report's authors, is no longer a rite of passage, the entryway to independence and mature sexuality. Young people defer it until after they have jobs and households, including households shared with each other. As marriage becomes one lifestyle flavor among many, it paradoxically becomes less rewarding: All the married people answering questions about whether they are or are not "very happy" may not be talking about anything that is objectively measurable, but they are talking about their feelings. Increasingly specialized, marriage feels wrong to more of the people who choose it.

This should not be surprising. Marriage, especially as Americans traditionally configured it, is hard. It satisfies primal urges—for intimacy, children—and upholds desirable institutions in a way that other living arrangements do not (there are no republican harems). Yet it comes at the cost of deferring or forgoing many gratifications. It is also always a shot in the dark. "To choose" a husband or a wife, wrote Denis de Rougemont in *Love in the Western World*, his exegesis of the Tristan myth, "is to wager." By redefining the game, Americans make the wager harder.

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ Memo to: WFB
From: Rich [Lowry]
Re: Hot poop

Bill: Would you pass the excitement below on to the readers?

—We have two new senior editors. Ramesh Ponnuru is well known to everyone, the Princeton intern in 1994, essayist and reporter at NR with upwardmobile record, now a senior editor.

—David Pryce-Jones has been literary editor of the *Financial Times* and of *The* (London) *Spectator*, is author of 21 books, has taught at Berkeley and the Iowa Writers' Workshop. A dazzling talent.

Rich: With great pleasure. Congratulations to the new editors.

XX Bill

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: The word "Yankee" has never been satisfactorily etymologized according to some experts. My favorite derivation is that it comes from the 17th-century Dutch who settled New Amsterdam. The Dutch used the name "Jan Kaas" (John Cheese) as a belittling epithet when they referred to the English who settled New England. So in reality the Boston Red Sox should be the Boston Yankees. And the present-day New York Yankees should then be called the New York Imposters for promulgating this ruse for all these years. Better still, we should call them the New York Grifters. In 1626 Dutch leader Peter Minuit swindled Manhattan Island from Chief Wahoo for $24 worth of trinkets. History is not clear on whether George Steinbrenner was a principal or just a limited partner in the deal. The Dutch then banished Chief Wahoo to Cleveland, where he founded the Cleveland Indians. Little more is known about the Chief other than that he was a rather unhandsome man, as his present-day likeness shows. But he did go to an enthusiastic young Cleveland orthodontist in an effort to improve his smile. Have you ever seen the Chief frowning? Now a vociferous minority, consisting mainly of the usual PC suspects, wants to remove our beloved Chief's visage from the Indians' logo. Isn't being cheated out of Manhattan Island by New Amsterdam sharpies enough of a setback for one person, even a great Chief? Let's keep the Chief smiling and where he belongs!

Charles O. Vimmerstedt
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Mr. Vimmerstedt: Okay, let's!

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Because of your command of the language, I am writing for information on a matter outside of politics, religion, economics, et al.

This letter is probably an intrusion, but I have exhausted other sources such as professors of English and etymologists for an explanation, and so, as a result of reading your *Right Word*, I turn to you for one last try. My curiosity has long been piqued by the split infinitive. I remember that nothing caught a teacher's eye like a split infinitive. In Latin it is impossible to split an infinitive simply because that verb form is but a single word. However in translation to English it is possible and was always noted in red ink. I am writing on the chance that you might answer a few questions:

1. Why, when English was being codified, did the academicians involved decide to make the infinitive two words?

2. Conversely, why do other languages use but a single word?

3. Why did avoiding the split infinitive become such a shibboleth in English and American schools?

4. Why aren't other errors in grammar or syntax or even spelling looked upon with the same severity as a split infinitive?

Sincerely,
Raymond E. Leary
Shelburne, Vt.

Dear Mr. Leary: Great heavens! I haven't the *slightest* idea why our forefathers decided to make "amare" into "to love," and I'm not sure I'm all that curious how come. I don't think you're correct that the anti–split-infinitive rule is bothering anybody these days. But for a perfect perspective, look at Fowler, page 579.

Cordially, —WFB

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■ THE BUDGET ■

The Surplus War

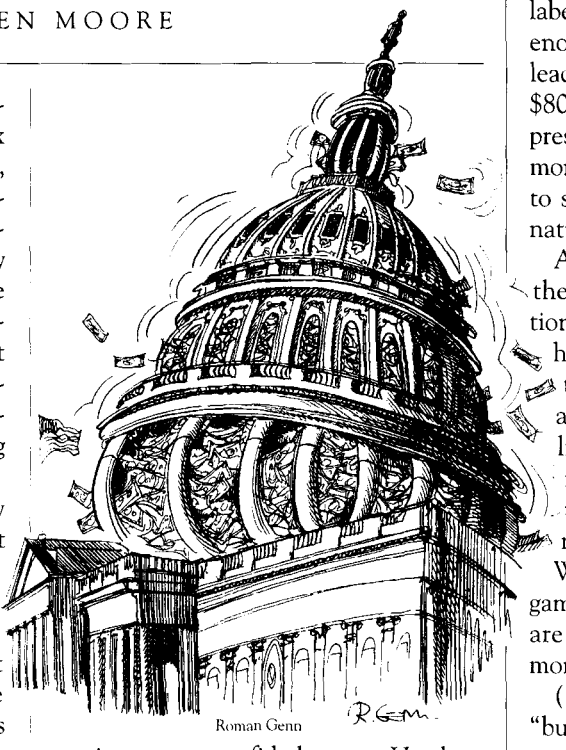
How the GOP should fight.

STEPHEN MOORE

DURING his triumphant press conference announcing $2.9 trillion in tax surpluses over the next 15 years, President Clinton outfoxed the Republicans on the budget yet again. The president cleverly grabbed the headlines by proclaiming that he now wants to retire the national debt. Every penny of it eventually. This unexpected pronouncement calling for a debt-free America was quintessentially Clintonian: seductive, economically defensible, and utterly lacking in sincerity.

To believe that Bill Clinton actually wants to pay off the national debt stretches credibility beyond the snapping point. After all, it was just three years ago that Clinton, in the midst of hand-to-hand combat with Newt Gingrich, admitted that balancing the budget wasn't a high priority of his administration. It was just six months ago Clinton proposed an obese budget with 58 new federal programs carrying a five-year price tag of $150 billion. Bill Clinton wants to retire the debt about as much as André Agassi wants to face another Pete Sampras first serve.

As it happened, Clinton's dedication to debt repayment lasted only a bit over 90 seconds. Having declared himself the slayer of debt, he went on to propose a $118 billion prescription-drug benefit for seniors—arguably the most expensive new open-ended entitlement program since Medicare itself was created more than three decades ago. Most health-care analysts say the price tag could be more than twice as high as the administration blithely predicts, once Uncle Sam starts paying for every prescription from Viagra to $10,000 life-expanding wonder drugs. "We couldn't possibly hold costs down," one Democratic senator confided to me. He then smiled mischievously: ". . . unless, of course, we imposed strict price controls on the pharmaceutical industry."



Roman Genn

A few days later, the president jetted off on Air Force One for a seven-city tour bearing taxpayer-financed gifts: all part of his latest plan to direct $15 billion in new subsidies to inner cities and other depressed areas. He's also touting his latest scheme to provide federal payments to parents who stay at home with sick kids.

It is truly a testament to Bill Clinton's salesmanship that even though his agenda these days is filled with the most preposterous self-contradictions, he's somehow winning the debate. And he's winning because Republicans have no unified economic message to counter Clinton's own: a government that pays its bills but also gives you everything you want.

As usual, the White House is at least one chess move ahead of the Republicans. While balanced-budget Republicans are still internalizing the sudden economic reality that we truly are in a new era of trillion-dollar tax surpluses (they should have listened to NR's Larry Kudlow, who predicted this tax windfall almost two years ago), the president has already staked out the money for his own grandiose priorities. His aim is to preempt GOP tax-cut plans by labeling them fiscally reckless. And sure enough, when Republican congressional leaders announced their proposal for an $800 billion tax cut over ten years, the press dutifully reported that this was the money the administration wanted to use to save Social Security and pay off the national debt.

Adding to the GOP's miseries is that the party is splintered into three factions: the Old Bull spenders, the debt hawks, and the supply-side tax cutters. The price of this disunity is that a multitrillion-dollar tax surplus is likely to be earmarked for government expansion, not for pro-growth tax and market-based entitlement reforms.

What the Republicans need is a fiscal game plan for the post-deficit era. Here are five suggestions for regaining the moral high ground in the surplus debate.

(1) Stop referring to this windfall as a "budget surplus." These are "tax overpayments," not budget surpluses. The primary explanation for massive forthcoming surpluses is that we are still collecting revenues from the Cold War. This is the first post-war period in U.S. history that has not brought with it a substantial reduction in tax bills. The average effective tax burden—combined federal income and payroll taxes as a share of wages and salaries—has risen from 23 percent to 28 percent in the past six years.

(2) Enough already about "tight" spending caps. Social spending is higher now in real terms than ever before. Even if Congress sticks to the spending caps dictated by the 1997 budget deal, the federal government will spend more than $10 trillion over the next five years—more than the government spent, adjusted for inflation, in its first 200 years.

(3) Seize back the moral high ground by refusing to spend the budget surplus. Surpluses should benefit future generations. Americans believe this—which is

Mr. Moore is director of fiscal-policy studies at the Cato Institute.

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why so many voters are inclined to the rhetoric of retiring the debt. Fine. If we care about "the children," then surplus taxes shouldn't finance Bud Shuster's highway and airport projects or Bill Clinton's social-welfare programs. This means no free drug benefits for seniors. It's bad enough that the federal government's income-redistribution schemes rob Peter to pay Paul. It borders on fiscal child abuse when Peter is 2 years old and Paul is 72.

(4) Shrink the debt by making the economy grow. Jack Kemp and Ronald Reagan had it right all along: We *did* eventually grow our way out of the deficit. Today, the U.S. economy is 70 percent larger and tax collections are three times higher than when "Reaganomics" was launched. If the

■

Robbing Peter to pay Paul borders on fiscal child abuse when Peter is 2 and Paul is 72.

■

economy were to continue to grow at about 4 percent a year for the next 25 years, the next generation of workers would have a standard of living twice the level of today's. And at income levels that high, the debt would be financially inconsequential. Too many Republicans are asking the wrong question: The issue is not, How do we get the debt down to zero?, but rather, How do we sustain high economic growth without inflation for the long term?

(5) Most important, think big, as Clinton does. Mountainous tax surpluses offer Congress a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to achieve two monumental conservative public-policy goals on the scale of the Great Society: to scrap the tax code and to convert Social Security into an individual investment option. Both of these objectives have widespread voter appeal. The GOP should not pass up the opportunity to connect with the 125 million-strong new investor class, the burgeoning community of nearly 100 million Internet users, and 20 million 18- to 35-year-olds who have only contempt for pay-as-you-go Social Security. These Americans have learned from experience that market incentives, not government, create wealth and foster new opportunities.

While some amounts of debt retirement can be beneficial, the idea of devoting more than $1 trillion to debt reduction over the next five years is both politically foolish and economically unsound—foolish because, as Rep. John Kasich has noted, "Congress will simply spend large portions of the money that is not staked out for tax cuts—it's in our nature"; unsound because the burden of the national debt is already receding rapidly. Even without a penny of actual debt retirement, the national debt will fall to 25 percent of GDP in the next five years, the lowest level of federal indebtedness since before World War II. Meanwhile, taxes have risen to their highest level since the war. Clearly taxes are a far more onerous burden on today's economy than debt.

As for the GOP's debt hawks, they are well intentioned but misguided. Debt is not always inherently undesirable. We should have learned that in the 1980s, when the federal government rang up $2 trillion in federal deficits. That debt helped finance tax cuts and other economic reforms that revived a moribund economy ravaged by high tax rates, double-digit interest rates, and loose money. The result was a stunning 17-year expansion. The debt also financed a military build-up that accelerated the collapse of the Soviet Union.

But the real tyranny of the debt hawks is that their fiscal priorities may inadvertently help finance the growth of government. Debt retirement allows the pro-spending forces to pay down their credit card, so it can be used later to pay for the next multitrillion-dollar Great Society experiment. Tax cuts, by contrast, are debilitating to the statist impulse because they drain the government's coffers and make new Nanny State programs unaffordable. This is why Milton Friedman has always contended that the only way to cut government spending is to cut taxes first. And this explains why government expansionists in Washington can tolerate modest debt retirement, but are ferociously opposed to tax cuts.

The born-again debt hawk Bill Clinton understands this fact of fiscal life all too well. The mystery is why so few Republicans do. **NR**

■ ENTITLEMENTS ■

Old Money

Yet more benefits for wealthy seniors.

CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

NOBODY was surprised last week when President Clinton heaved a trillion-dollar bouquet of new benefits onto the doorsteps of the 39 million aged and disabled who qualify for Medicare. The plan came hideously packaged in a wadded *paperasse* of phase-ins, income transfers, sliding scales, caps, bylaws, and waivers for the indigent—all of which threaten to make a doctor's visit only slightly less complicated than filling out a Form 1040. But those senior citizens able to cut through the mess probably liked what they found.

The plan, it's true, adds new deductibles for lab work and higher ones for doctor's visits. But these are amply offset by free preventive screenings and a promise that those who choose low-cost HMO substitutes instead of high-cost "classic" Medicare will get to pocket the money they save. What's more, a new program would allow early retirees to buy into Medicare at 62, and the reforms would shovel enough money into the entitlement to keep it solvent until the oldest baby boomers are well into their 80s. The centerpiece of the reform, however, is the president's plan to have the federal government match (for a small fee) patient expenditures on prescription drugs. It's central because it could spark—on the eve of a presidential election—the first pitched battle over big government since the government shutdowns of 1995.

The prescription-drug program will

Mr. Caldwell is senior writer for *The Weekly Standard*.

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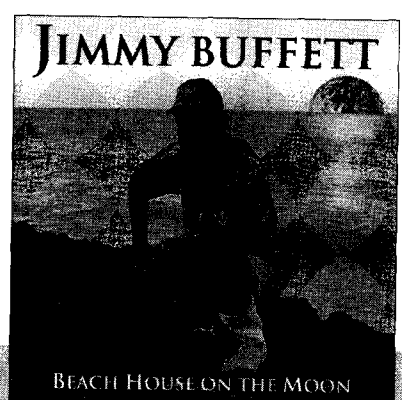

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cost $118 billion in its first decade, a figure that even the plan's biggest fans warn is destined to soar. Both its supporters and its detractors have long seen such a measure as inevitable—they've just differed on the terms under which it would be introduced. Liberal Democrats always envisioned using prescription drugs to bloat the existing Medicare entitlement into something resembling a national health plan. But even small-government Republicans (led by House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee chairman Bill Thomas of California) and reform-minded Democrats (like Louisiana senator John Breaux) were resigned to it. They hoped to use cheap prescription drugs to lure normally risk-averse oldsters into a reinvented health plan that would rely on the private sector.

In a sense, including prescription drugs in Medicare is merely an attempt to bring the entitlement into the age of modern medicine. The Medicare act passed by the Johnson administration in 1965 didn't cover prescription drugs. But that was no big deal, because there were very few serious, chronic conditions that could be treated with them. Today, pharmaceutical companies have come up with an array of drugs for hypertension, high cholesterol, AIDS, and various mental ailments that make it unnecessary to darken a doctor's door for months or even years. All the patient has to do is take a fistful of pills that can cost up to hundreds of dollars a month. Sometime in the past two decades, health care shifted its venue from the doctor's office to the medicine cabinet. As it did, the Medicare entitlement was gradually being hollowed out—without any need for small-government rhetoric, budget slashing, or bureaucratic reform.

The big mystery is why there has been no particular clamor for drug benefits that would reflect medical treatment as it is actually administered. One reason is that, in the absence of Medicare drug coverage, "Medigap" and other private insurance plans have picked up the slack, covering two-thirds of elderly Americans. But a second, and more important, reason is that seniors are so outrageously, disproportionately rich. In an almost unbroken line since FDR launched Social Security in 1935, senior citizens have been living longer, getting bigger benefits, and taking up a growing share of the national wealth. The richest age cohort in the country by household wealth is 55–64 at $372,000, but seniors aged 65–74 are right behind them at $345,000. Nonetheless, for half a century, national mythology persisted in seeing the elderly as the indigents they were in the 1930s. Government, meanwhile, persisted in claiming a desperate need to shower benefits on what was in fact America's most upwardly mobile age bracket.

This year's early retirees represent the beginning of a decade-long wave

Roman Genn

in which the most economically cosseted generation in American history cashes in its chips. Those born between 1937 and 1945 were too young to have felt the bite of the Depression, but old enough to enjoy the booming economy of 1960s. They had their money in real estate by the 1970s, when younger earners with more liquid assets (and older ones with fixed incomes) were hammered by inflation. After careers uninterrupted by either the Korean or the Vietnam War, they spent the Reagan (earning) boom in their earning prime, and entered the Clinton (investing) boom with a lifetime of earnings to invest. Never has there been an age bracket in whose direction the economic deck was more favorably stacked.

It is only in the 1990s that Americans have begun to catch on that seniors, as a class, need very little help. No one is catching on faster than seniors themselves. They are much more inclined to name declining moral values as the country's most pressing problem (26 percent) than they are to name declining Social Security payouts (16 percent). In 1996 and 1998, they bucked a broad turn away from the GOP and continued to back the party that promised them less.

When you break down the senior population, as pollster Ed Goeas of the Tarrance Group did in a recent survey, you get even more stunning results. Goeas distinguishes between "Roosevelt seniors," those over 70, whose economic impressions were formed by Depression childhoods, and "Reagan seniors"—those 60–69, who were shaped by the free-market ideas that came into vogue at the peak of their careers. These Reagan elders, in fact, are the *only* age group to favor Republicans on the generic congressional ballot, and the advantage is overwhelming. Democrats beat Republicans by small margins in all other cohorts, Goeas found, ranging from a 2-point advantage among those 18–34 to a 5-point advantage among those over 70. But Americans in their 60s favor Republicans by an *18-point* margin.

So, with Medicare undergoing a silent privatization and with seniors rich enough not to care, do Republicans have a shot at blocking the Clinton plan? Don't count on it. The growing self-confidence of seniors does not justify the optimism of certain conservatives (most recently Robert M. Goldberg in the *Wall Street Journal*) that the Clinton plan is dead in the water. "The Clinton drug plan will be rejected," Goldberg wrote, "because it does not reflect the new reality of aging in America." But a

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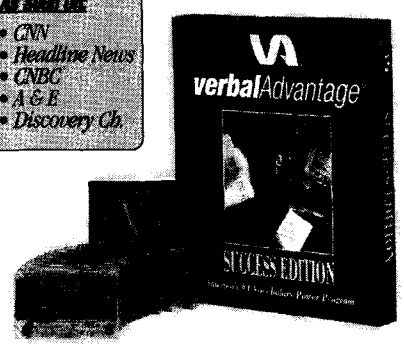

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new economic reality doesn't always mean a new political reality. Households in the 65–74-year-old age bracket have a mean net worth of $345,000—but so what? Have you seen any agitation to do away with senior citizens' bus discounts? When was the last time any constituency mobilized to *reject* an entitlement aimed directly at them? (*Dear Publisher's Clearinghouse: I'm returning that $794 billion check you sent me because I'm just too darn rich . . .*")

Senior citizens are rejecting big government, but selectively. Like many Americans, they're rejecting *other people's* big government. As John Hood of North Carolina's John Locke Foundation points out, seniors lead the charge in rejecting referenda on bond issues to build bridges, stadiums, and other public works. One explanation could be that they've become small-government fans. Another is that they want to protect tax revenues for the transfer payments they gobble up so prodigiously.

Furthermore, health care is one of those issues where lifestyle is more important than economics. If your 72-year-old sister is immobilized with congestive heart failure and too poor to afford the pills to keep it under control, it's unlikely your responsibilities will stop at buying them for her. Nope—she'll be living in your spare bedroom, pleading for another glass of ice water and forcing you to cancel your plans for that Golden Agers' wine tour of the Napa Valley.

That's why, when Democrats don't mess up the rhetoric of the health-care issue as they did in 1993, Americans express a preference for a socialist health-care system—and a landslide preference for keeping the socialist health-care system we already have. Trent Lott and other Republicans have already ceded the issue in spirit by focusing their early attacks on the new co-payments and deductibles—the one corner of the Clinton plan that actually rolls back part of the entitlement. What politicians of both parties increasingly realize is that we've produced a country rich enough to do without socialist medicine—and a citizenry pampered and dependent enough not to want to. **NR**

■ **RACIAL POLITICS** ■

W.'s Preferences

So where *does* he stand on affirmative action?

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

NOT a single vote has yet been cast to make George W. Bush the next Republican presidential nominee, but an aura of invincibility has settled benignly over his campaign nonetheless. Some have compared this to the momentum supposedly enjoyed by Ronald Reagan in 1980, but Bush currently seems even more unstoppable. The conventional wisdom both inside and outside the GOP is that Bush is a likely "winner" whereas in 1980—strange though it now seems—that same wisdom held that Reagan was almost the weakest candidate his party could field. A cartoon at the time had a Samaritan persuading a suicidal elephant not to do anything foolish—only to be defiantly told, "No! I'm going to choose Reagan."

If Republicans then chose a potential loser out of political conviction, they now seek to convince themselves that a sure winner happens to share their principles. Abortion is the main issue on which the Right has been deciphering George W.'s delphic formulations for comfort—and they have found it! He will make a general statement of principle that pleases conservatives ("I am pro-life") while distancing himself from controversial political actions required to implement the principle ("no litmus tests for judges"). As a campaign strategy, this works perfectly: The media report the general impression that the candidate has distanced himself from the Religious Right while conservatives scrutinize the fine print and conclude that he is sound underneath. This requires believing that Bush is the strong silent type of pro-lifer who will seek to move public opinion in an anti-abortion direction by never talking about it.

Having been road-tested on abortion, this approach is now being applied to racial preferences. After the customary warm-up of ducking, weaving, and avoiding the topic, Bush has evolved the formula that he is against racial preferences and quotas but chary of Proposition 209—the California initiative to outlaw them. Will conservatives buy this one?

One distinguished conservative has already done so. Writing in *California News* (Calnews.com), Thomas E. Wood argues that most conservatives—and, in particular, NR's own John Miller—have been too quick to conclude that Bush has been "evasive, if not downright dishonest" on the issue. And since Wood is not only a co-author of Proposition 209 but also the moderator of the Internet news service put out by Americans Against Discrimination and Preferences (www.aadap.org)—an indispensable guide to America's daily mishandling of race—his opinion must be taken very seriously indeed.

Wood argues that the Bush stance is in fact principled. The governor has said plainly that he will "eliminate" racial and ethnic preferences, but he couples this statement of opposition with an equally strong commitment to something called "affirmative access" (i.e., non-preferential ways of providing opportunity to minorities and the disadvantaged). And that is not only a principled stand, it is also a shrewd one, since it enables Bush to attack preferences without opening himself to the charge that he is writing off minorities. Why should he be required, asks Wood with almost superhuman reasonableness, to state his views in the terms of Prop. 209, especially since 209 makes no mention of the affirmative access that is the other half of his anti-preference policy?

In endorsing the Bush formula, Wood is on one side of a conservative divide. He was joined there two weeks ago by Ward Connerly, currently campaigning for a Florida version of 209, who endorsed Bush and hosted a fundraising luncheon for him in Sacramento. (In reply, Bush said of Connerly: "I like him. I'm glad he's supporting me.") On the opposite side of the divide, however, is Glynn Custred, the other author of 209,

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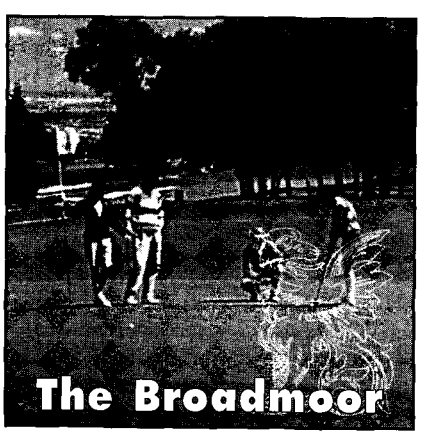

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The Weekend

For more information call Noelle McGlynn at 703-683-5561 ext. 3.

* as reported by Maureen Dowd, Katherine Seelye, *New York Times*, and John Hockenberry, MSNBC

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who interpreted Bush's refusal to endorse the proposition as a cynical bid for Latino votes. Custred described Bush sourly as "a Gray Davis Republican" (a reference to the moderate Democrat who is governor of California).

In terms of formal logic, there is no way of determining which side is right. The point of verbal formulas such as "against preferences and also against 209" is to please everyone. We discover which half of the equation is the steak and which the sizzle only when the candidate is in power. Until then, we have to base our judgments on other considerations. Here are five questions that might guide us:

■

Governor Bush has done little or nothing to eliminate preferences in Texas.

■

1. What is Bush's record on preferences until now? If Tom Wood were the candidate, I would accept the Bush formulation in a New York minute. His actions have demonstrated that getting rid of race and gender preferences is a principle he cares about. But Gov. Bush has done little or nothing to eliminate preferences in Texas. Indeed, he recently signed a bill that will preserve some of them. What persuades us he will be better on the federal level?

2. Where do his electoral calculations point? Bush is known to be concentrating on winning the Latino vote. In itself that is common sense, especially when that vote is growing as a percentage of the total electorate. But *how* does he propose to win it? His brother, Gov. Jeb Bush, and the Florida GOP are desperately trying to prevent Ward Connerly from getting a local version of 209 on the state ballot. They calculate that, by driving Hispanics into the Democratic column and increasing black-voter participation, such an initiative would damage the Bush presidential campaign in 2000. As Glynn Custred points out, however, such calculations share the same balkanizing logic as preferences: "This suggests that Bush sees us as a country of two distinct nations—one Latino and the other Anglo—and that each of these nations needs its own quite distinct pitch based on different principles in order to garner votes." If that logic should win Bush a first presidential election, however, he is unlikely to change it until he has won a second—and maybe never.

3. What does "affirmative access" mean in practice? Some forms of affirmative action—e.g., scholarships for low-income students—are compatible with the legal equality of all Americans. But not many. And since Proposition 209 and anti-preference decisions in the courts, the preference lobby has invented various devices to preserve quotas under another name: Notoriously, the federal Education Department is seeking to prevent colleges from using test scores if members of minorities score relatively badly on them. Bush himself signed into law a bill that, by admitting the top 10 percent of every graduating class in the state, would effectively overturn the *Hopwood* decision outlawing preferential admissions in Texas state universities. Although this sounds meritocratic, it would in fact mean that some students, if they attended schools with poor test records, would probably be admitted ahead of others with higher scores. Would President Bush II consider such evasions to qualify under affirmative access? If not, what would? As the tabloids say: I think we should be told.

4. How are our political opponents interpreting his stance? Dick Morris, no liberal, commented as follows: "Cynics could dismiss the Bush move as an act—until he showed real class and extraordinary courage by going to California and disavowing the last two ballot initiatives that passed with overwhelming Republican support—the ban on affirmative action and the elimination of public services like schools to illegal aliens. W. had the guts to go to California and endorse the essentials of affirmative action—no quotas but increased minority recruitment—and to support public education for the children of illegal aliens. Wow. We have not seen that kind of stand-up politics in quite a while in America." Even if this interpretation is mistaken today, Bush is likely to be charmed by it as it is increasingly repeated. Class? Guts? Stand-up politics? Wow! All for taking the coward's way out and confusing a bunch of impotent conservatives. If he could get such plaudits in opposition, just consider what praise he might earn in the White House.

5. Does he have the right stuff? Let us suppose that Tom Wood is entirely correct and that Bush really *wants* to eliminate racial preferences. Is he aware of how hard that will be and how much bitter opposition it will provoke? So far in his short career Bush has prospered by playing the Nice Guy. As governor, he has been—like many others—a beneficiary of Ronald Reagan whose fiscal and economic policies kept him in surpluses and enabled him to play Santa Claus. But a campaign against quotas would compel him to confront the prejudices of the media, moderate Republicans, and of course the Democratic party head on. It would be a bloody and protracted battle—the kind of battle you need a Teddy Roosevelt, an FDR, a Thatcher, a Reagan to fight. Is Bush prepared to spend the political capital needed to win it?

If W. satisfies conservatives on these points, then he can probably be relied upon to fulfill his promise to eliminate preferences. Incidentally, how did he do on your private tally? Just curious. **NR**

■ **CAMPAIGN 2000** ■

The Awkward Warrior

Steve Forbes tries again.

RICHARD LOWRY

THE Waldorf Astoria dining room is packed to the rafters—literally. People are seated all the way up in the third-floor balcony, as if to take in a sold-out opera. Altogether, there are 1,200 Steve Forbes supporters jammed into the Park Avenue hotel. Forbes will raise $1 million on the night, a haul that any candidate besides George W. Bush

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would envy. A full house, a friendly audience, open wallets—a politician's dream.

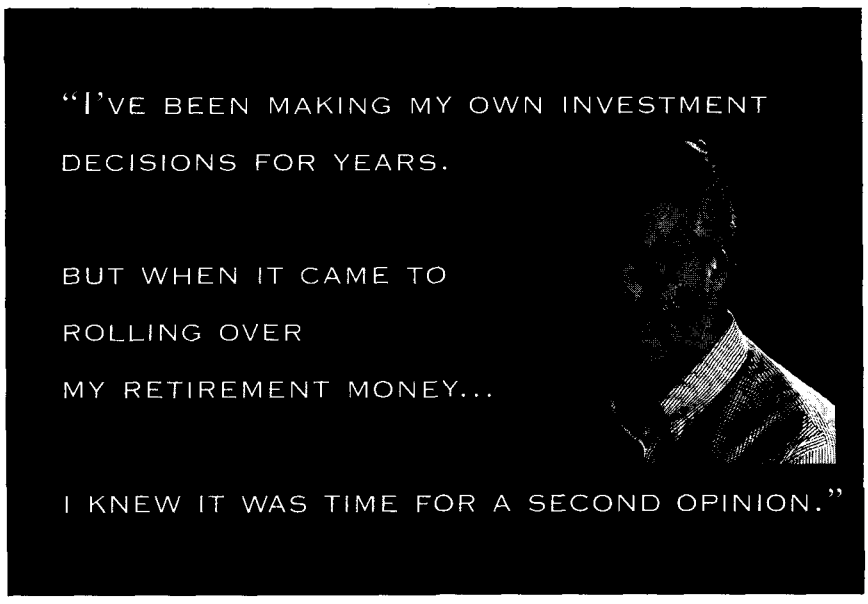
But when Forbes takes the stage, he strides to an "X" taped to the floor away from the podium, places his feet on it, and doesn't move for the next 20 minutes. It's Liddy Dole, cryogenically frozen. Reading from two TelePrompTers, Forbes delivers a speech so flat that one enthusiastic woman up front can be heard conspicuously applauding in the crowd of 1,200. Forbes acknowledges her from the stage—twice.

Perhaps she deserves the recognition. Finding applause lines in the speech—written, according to Forbes aides, by former George Bush speechwriter Jennifer Grossman, with heavy input from the candidate himself—isn't easy. Forbes dismisses "scripted clichés," but talks of "a new era and a new time and a new kind of campaign . . . in this new millennium"; of "a vision of America that would let all realize the American dream"; of campaigning with "every fiber of my being . . . because I want the American people to win."

A central section of the speech is either itself an out-of-control cliché or a deep conceptual confusion. Forbes complains that "wherever I go, I find Americans who do not feel free." It seems that a couple who struggle to make ends meet, or can't afford health care, or can't send their children to a private school, are not free. Does this mean that Forbes, who can afford all those things—plus millions of dollars worth of nice biographical ads in June—is very free? Forbes is trying to criticize the power of government to tax, regulate, and maintain monopoly public schools. But it sounds as if he's endorsing a profoundly unconservative vision of positive freedom, like the socialists who promise to free people by giving them guaranteed health care.

When Forbes concludes—"Victory is possible, my friends. And . . . I will give that victory to you"—balloons fall to the floor. Tiny cannons fire streamers toward the stage. And Forbes's wife and daughters join him in an oddly inappropriate celebration, as the deflated crowd mills quietly from the room.

The Waldorf is just one night, or as all Forbes aides say, "just a fundraiser." Some mistakes were avoidable, and pre-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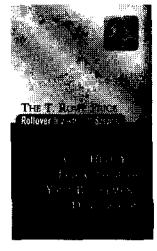

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sumably won't be repeated. Vetting the preliminary speeches introducing Forbes might have prevented one woman from making the cringe-inducing boasts that Forbes knows the name of his dry-cleaning guy and once ate breakfast at the International House of Pancakes ("She should be shot," a Forbes aide says afterward). But the Waldorf night is revealing, putting in stark relief at least three major Forbes vulnerabilities that will hamper his candidacy.

The Awkward Candidate. Forbes aides explain that the candidate eschewed the podium at the Waldorf—thus exposing all of his awkward movements—because he appears stiff behind a podium. Well, he appears stiff anywhere else as well. He's just flat-out stiff. A week or so after the dinner, before a group of seniors in New Orleans, Forbes speaks again without a podium, a mike pinned to his lapel. His most dynamic movement is looking from one side of the room to the other. The way Forbes moves, you can imagine a puppeteer—or a speech coach?—working away, pulling the strings: thumb jab, freeze, move head right, thumb jab, freeze.

Forbes just doesn't appear comfortable in his skin. And he's certainly not a glad-hander. When a few admirers approach him in the New Orleans airport, he manages to ask where they are from, then nods and smiles. Then nods and smiles some more. He is stunningly incapable of small talk. For him, running for president must be a transcendent act of will. Richard Nixon too had to will himself into small convivialities, but he was impelled by a dark insecurity that seems absent from Forbes. When Forbes stands silent, smiling at one of his fans, it just seems somehow sweetly sad.

Message: I care—about details. The Forbes camp brags about his "substance." And there is no doubt Forbes has a fluid and prodigious knowledge of policy. Before the group in New Orleans, he discusses health care and Social Security with an assurance no other candidate can match. But campaigns aren't won on substance in the "Heritage Foundation Background Paper: The Perils of Managed Competition" sense. They are won on themes, simply expressed, that capture something larger in the political ether. "It's the economy, stupid," in 1992 wasn't a detailed program, and neither was the pledge of allegiance in 1988. Any campaign inevitably relies heavily on generalities and slogans—witness Forbes's own limp attempt at the Waldorf.

The deeper problem for Forbes is that his set of issues isn't that different from Bush's. Yes, his proposals are more detailed, but that won't last forever (Bush will come up with ten-point plans too). Bush is more or less onboard a Forbes-lite agenda. Will a Forbes "flat tax that is a tax cut" be more saleable than simply a Bush tax cut? Will his far-reaching Social Security privatization be more popular than whatever partial plan Bush endorses?

Forbes, just like Bush, is reluctant to stake out controversial positions (e.g., on race preferences, multiculturalism, or immigration). The two men represent a similar impulse in the party. Recall that in 1996 Forbes ran as a stand-in for the original "compassionate conservative," Jack Kemp. At his announcement in 1995, Forbes even made cautiously critical noises about the Republican welfare bill. So Forbes may get to Bush's right on economic issues, but he won't really on anything else. Despite his long-running campaign for social-conservative support, Forbes didn't mention abortion in his Waldorf speech. On the stump, he talks of "the freedom to be born," not exactly a pro-life call to the barricades.

The Bio-sphere. Forbes is handicapped by the fact that he has no compelling personal "story" like most successful presidential candidates. He's not the "man from Hope." He's not a WWII fighter pilot shot down at 20. He's the son of an incredibly successful businessman (at least he wasn't president), who in turn was the son of a striving entrepreneur. So Forbes reaches back two generations to tell his personal story. A biographical video shown at the Waldorf focuses for a long time on the founding Forbes, who has all the "log cabin" qualities his grandson lacks—an immigrant who starts a business, nearly goes broke, and achieves success against the odds. Forbes retails the story on the stump too, but it's a strained connection to the American dream: "My grandfather was Horatio Alger."

All this said, Forbes still poses a threat to Bush. Not necessarily because of his "ideas," as he insists, but because of his money and determination. Bush's record-breaking fundraising only helps Forbes by squeezing all the other candidates; they have to compete with Bush for donors, he doesn't. Then, there's the Forbes grit. He may be quiet, but he's a determined fighter.

Forbes ran the toughest attack ads of the 1996 campaign, without apology. He's already at Bush for increasing taxes 75 times, even though the measures were part of a broader tax-cut package. When challenged, Forbes blames Bush for creating the opportunity for Forbes's own demagogy: "If you're doing a cut, why not just do the cut so there's no ambiguity about it?" More important, Forbes is a committed candidate. While Pat Buchanan folds up his tent after each campaign, only to start his crusade/lark anew next time around, Forbes has never stopped running, developing a grassroots organization, suffering the inevitable indignities of any candidate, showing up every day in the arena.

"Sometimes things don't work out," Forbes says, referring to the Waldorf night. "Don't use TelePrompTers on a stage. It happens. But if you're not willing to keep probing, you'll never break through." Forbes may yet get his break, but, if the Waldorf is any indication, it will take determined probing, through formidable obstacles—some of his own making. **NR**

■ **CAMPAIGN 2000 II** ■

What a *Père!*

Gore Sr. in Jr.'s mind.

JOHN J. MILLER

IN the speech in which he launched his presidential candidacy, Al Gore talked about his dad: "When my father saw that thousands of his fellow Tennesseans were forced to obey Jim Crow laws, he knew America could do better. He saw a horizon in which his

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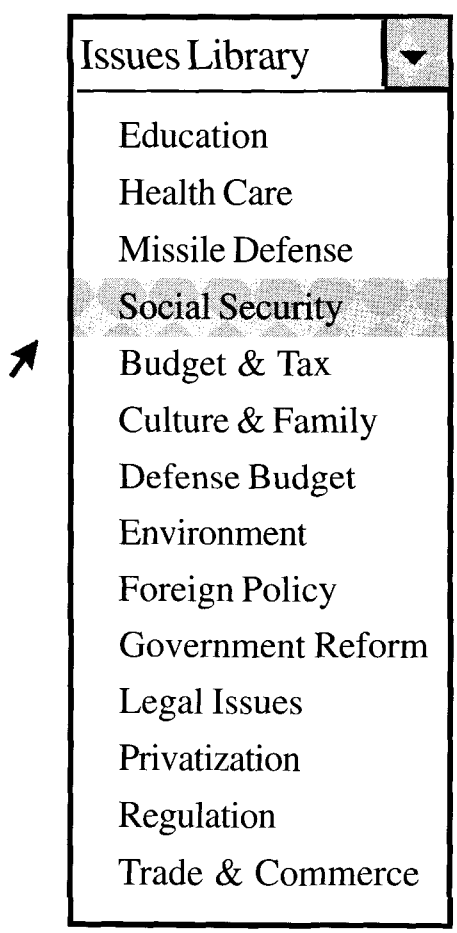

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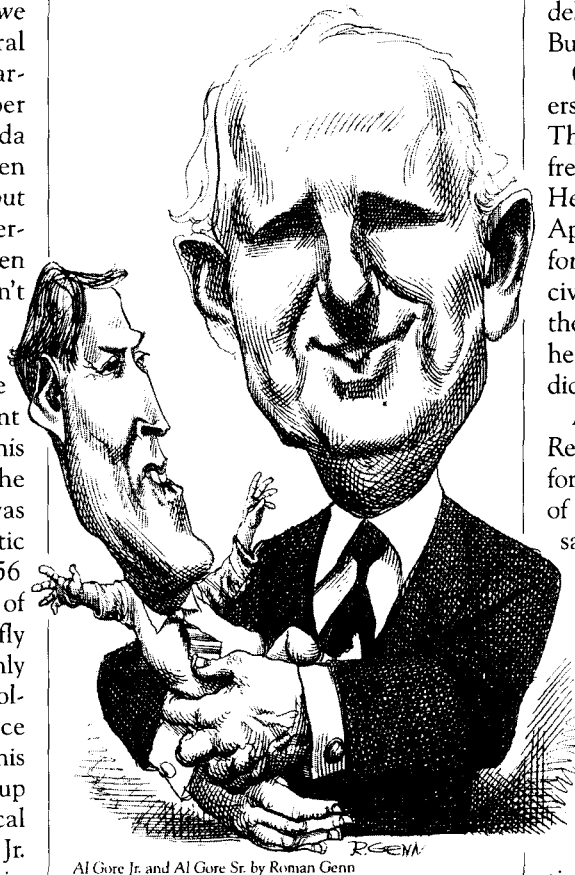
black and white constituents shared the same hopes in the same world." The late Albert Gore Sr. had fought against racism and for civil rights, the vice president continued, and these brave positions cost him his career in the Senate.

At crucial moments in his own political career, Al Gore has relied on his family not only for support, but for his rhetoric. At the 1992 Democratic convention, he waxed melodramatic about his son's serious injury in a car accident. Four years later, it was his sister's death by cancer—and Big Tobacco's responsibility for it. If the past is any guide, we can expect Gore Sr. to make several more posthumous campaign appearances between now and November 2000. Democratic pollster Celinda Lake is urging Gore to attract women voters by talking about his mother, but the vice president is clearly more interested in invoking his father: He's been doing it for years, and he surely won't stop now.

Unlike other relatives, though, Gore Sr. is not merely a prop in Gore Jr.'s oratorical kit. The vice president owes much of his political success to his dad, who served seven terms in the House, three in the Senate, and was himself considered for the Democratic vice-presidential nomination in 1956 and 1960. The elder Gore was one of Washington's leading liberals—stiffly formal (you couldn't call him Al, only Albert), but on good terms with his colleagues. In the '50s, he let Vice President Nixon bounce little Al on his knee. Gore Sr.'s only son grew up immersed in his father's political world—so much so that when Gore Jr. was named to the Democratic ticket in 1992, Gore Sr. commented, "We raised him for it."

Gore Sr.'s own time in Washington came to a screeching halt in 1970, when his arch-liberalism finally caught up with him. He had made his name by sponsoring the Senate version of the interstate-highway bill (his son, of course, would go on to claim fathership of the *information* highway). Yet ultimately he became more closely associated with opposition to tax cuts, fierce criticism of the Vietnam War, and skepticism about the Cold War ("The United States has been led astray by its obsession with communism," he wrote in a 1970 campaign book, presaging President Carter's infamous statement seven years later). Spiro Agnew traveled to Tennessee in 1970 to mock Gore as the "southern regional chairman of the Eastern Liberal Establishment." Gore lost a hard-fought election to Bill Brock, and liberals have been eulogizing him ever since. Last December, on Gore Sr.'s death, President Clinton noted, "You know, he might have been himself in national office if he hadn't been just a little too far ahead of his time."



Al Gore Jr. and Al Gore Sr. by Roman Genn

Gore clearly wants to please his dad—and that means he has a score to settle. The most eloquent lines from his remarks at his father's funeral are also the most bitter: "There were those many, many who loved him—and there were a few who hated him. Hated him for the right reasons." After a spirited narrative of his dad's career, Gore turned to explaining its end, growing somber: "A new ill wind was blowing across the land. And in many ways, he was unprepared for the meaner politics that started in 1970." You know, Nixon politics. Republican extremist politics. *The kind I'm fighting today.*

For all the ways Gore will try to distinguish himself from George W. Bush, the frontrunning Republican candidate, the two share one striking similarity: They are both famous sons named after famous fathers. This presents both a burden and an opportunity to each man. They will airbrush their fathers' legacies, highlighting the positive bits and removing the negative ones. Bush, for instance, will suggest that he can return something like his father's dignity to the Oval Office after eight years of lying and debauchery. But then there is President Bush's 1990 tax hike.

Gore's task is different, because voters are much less familiar with Gore Sr. The vice president will thus enjoy a freer hand in editing his father's image. He's already done so, with skill: Appearing on *Larry King Live* in 1995, for example, he discussed his father's civil-rights record, saying, "He voted for the Voting Rights Act. They said that he'd lose his seat over it, and actually he did."

A nice story—but not quite true. The Republican victor, Brock, had also voted for the Voting Rights Act (as a member of the House). "The vice president has said his father lost in 1970 because of civil rights," says Brock, who went on to become chairman of the Republican National Committee and now lives in Maryland. "That's simply not the case."

Gore Sr.'s record on civil rights is mixed. It featured acts of courage—he refused to sign the "Southern Manifesto," which called for southern states to ignore court desegregation orders—but he was hardly on the ramparts. "I was by no means a torchbearer for racial equality in my first campaign for the Senate in 1952," he wrote in a 1972 memoir. He had another chance to become a torchbearer in 1954, when the Supreme Court's *Brown* decision came down, but again he declined, declaring merely that *Brown* had to be enforced because it was "the law of the land"—a statement he later regretted as "timid."

He had another opportunity to strike a blow for civil rights in 1964, by voting for the Civil Rights Act. But it was an election year, and he could not find a

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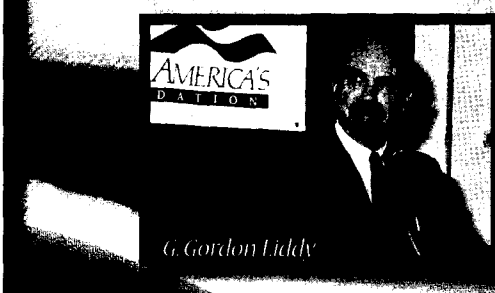

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way to get behind it. He was concerned that the law allowed the federal government to cut off funds to hospitals and schools that resisted desegregation—a radical step that would hurt sick people and children, he thought. Six years later, he wrote, "I feel very deeply that I was right."

Race must surely have played some role in Gore Sr.'s defeat, but other issues were more important. He was widely perceived as out of touch with his constituents. In 1969, he was loudly booed at a University of Tennessee football game. (In an otherwise admiring piece for *Harper's*, David Halberstam noted that "Albert has always been considered a little arrogant and uppity.") He won only 51 percent of the vote in a primary against a more conservative Democrat, who pointedly refused to endorse Gore Sr. in the general election. And then Brock was able to exploit Gore's weaknesses by criticizing him on school prayer and Vietnam. For Gore, the defeat was stinging, and he refused to congratulate Brock during his concession speech. Later, he wrote, "I did underestimate the depth and bitterness of the feeling among some Tennesseans about my Senate record."

Vice President Gore is trying to avoid some of his father's mistakes—his speeches nowadays concentrate on strengthening families rather than banning the internal combustion engine—and he is revising his father's career to suit his own political needs. How long before Gore says that his dad, who was an early supporter of Medicare, essentially created the system? *And who better to preserve it today than his son?* Or that Gore Sr. endorsed campaign-finance reform and never ran a dirty race? As *opposed to that money-grubbing Bush and those surrogates of his who're saying all those bad things about me.* Or that his father fought tax cuts for the rich? *The same!*

In his announcement speech, after celebrating his father, Gore soaked up the applause for a moment, then added: "I miss my dad, but I know he's here in spirit"—something like the ghost in *Hamlet*, walking the night till the foul crimes of Republicans are burnt and purged away by the loyal son. **NR**

■ THE SCANDAL ■

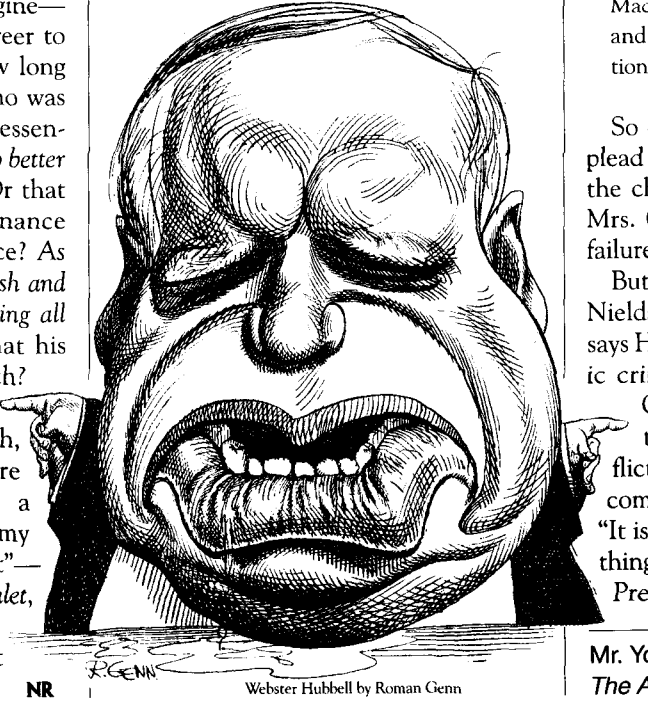
Hillary's Webb

Hubbell cops a plea.

BYRON YORK

To anyone familiar with the charges against him, Webster Hubbell gave an impressive performance outside the federal courthouse in Washington on June 30. Hubbell, the former Clinton confidant and Justice Department official who has already served time in jail for defrauding his law clients, had just pleaded guilty to felony charges arising from the sham real-estate deal known as Castle Grande. But he was angry at reporters, who, he said, had gotten the story all wrong.

"The media reported . . . that I had agreed to plead guilty to lying to regulators, to cover up Mrs. Clinton's transactions and involvement in the IDC Castle Grande real-estate transaction," Hubbell said, his voice quivering. "That is absolutely not true. Mrs. Clinton did nothing wrong, and what I pled to has nothing to do with Mrs. Clinton or Castle Grande or the failure of Madison Savings and Loan."



Webster Hubbell by Roman Genn

Really? According to court papers, Hubbell pleaded guilty to Count One of the 15-count indictment against him (the other counts were dropped as part of the plea deal). It's worth wading through the legalese of the indictment to compare his speech on the courthouse steps with the exact charge to which he pleaded guilty (please note that the "1985–1986 billing partner" refers to the First Lady).

> From in or about March 1989 until on or about December 27, 1995, in the District of Columbia and elsewhere, Defendant Webster L. Hubbell . . . did knowingly and willfully falsify, conceal, and cover up by scheme material facts about and related to the true nature of Defendant Webster L. Hubbell's, the Rose Firm's, and the 1985–1986 billing partner's relationships to and with Seth Ward, Madison Guaranty, Madison Financial, and the IDC/Castle Grande transactions, and he did make materially false and fraudulent statements and representations to the FDIC and the RTC about the true nature of Defendant Webster L. Hubbell's, the Rose Firm's, and the 1985–1986 billing partner's relationships to and with Seth Ward, Madison Guaranty, Madison Financial, and the IDC/Castle Grande transactions.

So despite what Hubbell said, he *did* plead guilty to lying to regulators. And the charges had everything to do with Mrs. Clinton, Castle Grande, and the failure of Madison Savings and Loan.

But Hubbell, through his lawyer, John Nields, is not yielding an inch. Nields says Hubbell admitted to just one specific crime out of the many detailed in Count One: failing to tell regulators about a relatively minor conflict of interest involving an Arkansas company called Precision Industries. "It is unambiguously true that the only thing Webb admitted that he did is the Precision Industries thing," Nields

Mr. York is an investigative writer with *The American Spectator*.

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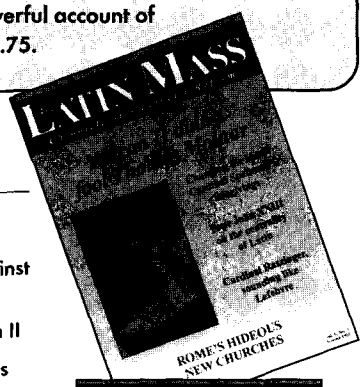

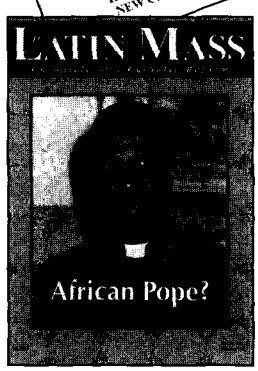

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says. "But if he admits that he did any of the things in Count One, he's guilty of Count One. It doesn't mean he did all of those things."

This is the kind of legal reasoning that allows defendants to go in front of the cameras and claim they're innocent. But Hubbell's denials can't conceal the fact that the plea was—at least in one sense—a victory for independent counsel Kenneth Starr. Count One is a summary of some of the most serious charges in the Whitewater scandal. Even at this late date—more than five years into the probe—Hubbell's admission of guilt validates the premise of the independent counsel's investigation. There was a Whitewater cover-up; it started in Little Rock, continued through the 1992 presidential campaign, and then moved to Washington with the Clinton administration.

On the other hand, Hubbell's no-jail plea bargain was a surrender by Starr, because it forced the independent counsel to concede that he couldn't win a Whitewater trial.

Starr's two most recent prosecutions, against Susan McDougal and Julie Hiatt Steele, both ended in hung juries. Especially in the McDougal case, the evidence of guilt was overwhelming. Yet Starr still lost. It seems highly unlikely that he would have done any better with Hubbell, a reality Starr admitted when he spoke to reporters after the plea hearing. "Recent experience has indicated to us that it is extraordinarily difficult to identify and find jurors who are able to set aside totally their understandings and preconceptions," he said. The ongoing furor over his investigation—generated by the White House campaign against Starr and his prosecutors—"has made it exceedingly difficult for the administration of justice to be carried on in an orderly way."

A Hubbell trial promised to be even more difficult than McDougal's and Steele's because the judge assigned to the case is deeply hostile to Starr. James Robertson, a Clinton appointee, has thrown out several of Starr's charges (only to be overturned by higher courts when Starr appealed). Robertson has also been openly critical of the independent counsel, sometimes using phrases that could have come straight from James Carville. Even if Starr had gone through with the trial and won, it's hard to imagine Robertson sending Hubbell to jail. Put all those factors together and Starr had lots of reasons to make a deal with Hubbell.

But what about Hubbell's side of things? If he could count on winning, what was his incentive to plead guilty to a felony? He's already taken a beating: jail, disbarment, and few job prospects outside Lippo-related businesses (which allegedly funneled him hush money after he was forced from the Justice Department). Why not go to trial and force Starr to endure another embarrassing hung jury? After the mistrial, the independent counsel would have to announce, as he has before, that he would not retry the case. Then it would all be over.

It might have worked—but Hubbell had his own reasons to settle. As part of the deal, Starr agreed to drop criminal tax charges against Hubbell's wife, his lawyer, and his accountant. Also, Hubbell will save a bundle in legal fees by not going through with the trial. And with the agreement, he's finally out of Starr's sights, giving him what Nields calls "absolute, total, final closure."

But Hubbell could have gotten all of that by making a deal months ago. Why plead now? Perhaps because a new incentive had entered the picture: the New York Senate campaign of Hillary Rodham Clinton.

The Castle Grande indictment referred to the First Lady more than 30 times; the charges implied that she had been as deeply involved in illegal activities as Hubbell. The trial had been scheduled for August 9, which would have fallen right in the middle of Mrs. Clinton's summertime "listening tour" of New York State. Starr had already placed her name on the witness list, and she was sure to be asked about her extensive decade-of-greed financial dealings—not something any candidate would care to discuss.

Nields says the Clinton campaign "wasn't a factor at all" in Hubbell's decision. But long after his departure from the administration, Hubbell stayed in contact with White House representatives and has been careful to obey their wishes. Just remember the famous prison tapes of conversations between Hubbell and his wife. "Marsha [White House official Marsha Scott] said you're not going to get any public support if you open up on Hillary," Hubbell's wife told him at one point. "I would not do that," Hubbell responded, later adding the famous line, "So I need to roll over one more time."

Now Hubbell has rolled over yet again. But he's also rolled Kenneth Starr. In his post-plea statement, Hubbell made it clear that he won't cooperate by giving prosecutors information on the Clintons. "I told the Office of Independent Counsel, as I told them five years ago," Hubbell said, "that I have no knowledge of any wrongdoing on behalf of the president or Mrs. Clinton." Such defiance must rankle the independent counsel, but given the odds against him, Starr had to accept the deal and bring the Whitewater investigation to an end—with Hubbell's stone wall still standing. **NR**

■ **THE BUREAUCRACY** ■

Energy Dependent

Why a department won't die.

KATE O'BEIRNE

In June, the president's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board declared, in the wake of the China spy scandal, that the Department of Energy is "a large organization saturated with cynicism, an arrogant disregard for authority, and a staggering pattern of denial." The report made news. It shouldn't have. Scores of reports have come to a similar conclusion about the department since President Reagan called for its elimination in 1980. But the Energy Department will continue to outlast its critics, owing to a classic combination of congressional posturing and patronage that frustrates attempts to reduce the size of government.

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Some were skeptical when Arizona voted to stop incarceration of drug users.

Here's what the experts are now saying:

SUPREME COURT OF ARIZONA

Drug Treatment and Education Fund Implementation Year Full Report
Fiscal Year 1997-1998

- Arizona taxpayers saved $2.6 million in one year
- 77.5% of drug possession probationers tested negative for drug use after the program

The court stated, "The Drug Medicalization, Prevention and Control Act of 1996" has allowed the judicial branch to build an effective probation model to treat and supervise substance abusing offenders . . . resulting in safer communities and more substance abusing probationers in recovery.

New York Times **Editorial, April 21, 1999**

ARIZONA SHOWS THE WAY ON DRUGS

Arizona is a politically conservative state. Its voters showed that they were tired of paying the costs of a bad idea. In requiring that drug offenders be treated before being freed of supervision, they may have made themselves safer. By treating drugs as a health problem, they have shown states like New York, which spends $700 million a year to imprison drug felons, a better way.

Talk of the Nation, **February 25, 1998**

Drug Czar, General Barry R. McCaffrey

"I don't think we're going to arrest our way out of this. We've got 1.7 million people behind bars right now."

President Clinton, Senator Lott, Speaker Hastert: Isn't it time to stop incarcerating nonviolent drug offenders and start treating them?

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The Department of Energy should not have been created in the first place. Douglas Feith, a veteran of the Reagan National Security Council and Pentagon staffs, explains that the department was premised on "universally held wrong thinking in the 1970s that oil was a commodity not subject to the laws of supply and demand." Following the Yom Kippur War, energy-security studies became all the rage. Feasting on research money from non-profits panicked by the "energy crisis," academics happily sounded the alarm about overdependence on Arab oil and became a powerful lobby in Democratic policy circles. In 1977, the Energy Department was born.

Other policy mistakes resulting from the same wrongheadedness were corrected relatively easily. Reagan vetoed the Emergency Petroleum Allocation Act, and the government stopped spending billions on the development of synthetic fuels. But Energy spending has gone on and on. Don Hodel, named energy secretary in 1982, recalls that the Reagan administration's proposal to abolish the department "would die in the [Republican] Senate for lack of a second, if I could get someone to introduce it in the first place."

No one is willing to defend the performance of the department, a hodgepodge of 40 different agencies and organizations, including nuclear-weapons–research laboratories. The department's sorry record in protecting nuclear secrets has been an issue from the beginning, chronicled in more than 30 reports by the General Accounting Office.

In 1982, the GAO issued a report headed "Safeguards and Security at [the Department of Energy's] Weapons Facilities Are Still Not Adequate"; in 1985, "Security Concerns at [Energy's] Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapons Production Facility"; in 1988, "Major Weaknesses in Foreign Visitor Controls at Weapons Laboratories"; in 1991, "Nuclear Security: Safeguards and Security Weaknesses at [Energy's] Weapons Facilities."

The GAO and the department's own inspector general provided detailed reports of security lapses. In 1987, the backlog of security investigations into personnel numbered more than 120,000. In 1990, a report concluded that access to nuclear-weapons data was granted unnecessarily to 2,000 employees. There were virtually no security checks on visitors to the labs from "sensitive countries," which include China, Cuba, and North Korea. Between 1994 and 1996, the lab at Los Alamos performed security checks on fewer than 5 percent of the 2,714 visitors from "sensitive countries." (Since the labs are no longer making nuclear weapons, they have little to do apparently but invite foreign visitors.)

In its review of Energy's security and counterintelligence operations, the president's advisory board noted that since 1977 "the Department has been

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Last year, President Clinton requested a $1.5 billion increase for the department.

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the subject of a nearly unbroken history of dire warnings and attempted, but aborted, reforms." We are now due for another round. In response to the Cox Committee report on Chinese espionage, Congress will attempt yet another reform of the department. Good luck. As the advisory board noted, "Over the last dozen years, [the Energy Department] has averaged some kind of major departmental shake-up every two to three years. No President, Energy Secretary, or Congress has been able to stem the recurrence of fundamental problems."

When the new Republican Congress proposed at last getting rid of the department during its brief revolutionary period in 1995, Secretary Hazel O'Leary pledged a major cost-cutting reform of her agency. Her plan would have reduced spending by $14 billion over the following five years. But as soon as the threat of elimination disappeared, so too did the promised downsizing. Last year, President Clinton requested a $1.5 billion increase for the department.

In April, Republican senator Rod Grams of Minnesota and Republican representative Todd Tiahrt of Kansas reintroduced their bill to abolish the department and save taxpayers about $20 billion over the next five years. They propose moving the nuclear-research functions to the Department of Defense, where the nation's secrets would presumably be guarded more closely. The Senate bill has just two co-sponsors, and only about 30 members have co-sponsored the House version.

Tiahrt hopes that the department's very public failings will provide some momentum for his bill, but he is realistic about its chances. "Over the past 20 years, the Department of Energy has figured out how to get a project in just about everybody's district," he says. The department indeed owns and manages more than 50 major installations in 35 states.

Even if Energy cannot be eliminated, can the labs at least be transferred to Defense? Not likely. While they are the crown jewel of the Department of Energy, at Defense they would be just one priority among many, and they would probably—and deservedly—be slimmed down. But that isn't going to happen, owing to the accident of the labs' geographical location.

Los Alamos, New Mexico, has been the site of a high-tech laboratory since 1943, and others have since joined it, including the Sandia laboratories near Albuquerque. Today, government is a prime employer in the state, accounting for 27 percent of jobs there, one of the highest percentages in the country. And it will remain that way because the state's senior senator has the clout to ensure that it does.

Pete Domenici, the veteran GOP senator from New Mexico, serves on committees that both authorize and appropriate spending for the Energy Department, and he wields enormous influence as chairman of the Senate Budget Committee. For him, the department is mainly another federal jobs program. There are more than 14,000 well-paid contract employees at Los Alamos and Sandia, and department spending fans out across the state's economy. Take one local airport. In 1998, energy contractors at Sandia National Laboratories reported taking 4,500 trips to Washington, D.C., coming out to 87 trips a week.

And why not? Washington, after all, is the guarantor of their jobs—come what may. **NR**

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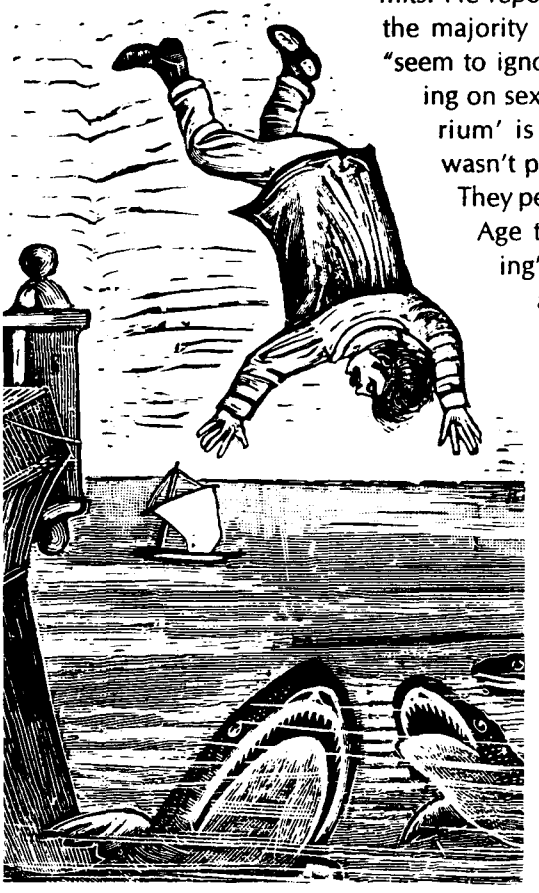
The Suicide of Catholicism

We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW get loads of mail, faxes, and phone calls from our readers, and one story we hear over and over again goes like this: "My wife and I scrimped and saved to send our six children to Catholic schools, all the way through college. We did everything we could to give our kids a solid Catholic upbringing. Now three are married (two outside the Church, one inside) and three are shacked-up. Only two of our kids show any interest in the Faith — ironically, two of the cohabiters. They take Communion without any qualms when they happen to be in church, and show no interest in straightening out their lives. All our kids are 'pro-choice' and 'pro-gay.' And, oh, we have no grandchildren."



The folks who tell us these stories are heartsick, feel betrayed, even worry about their children's souls.

What went wrong? Over the last 30 or so years many religious educators across the nation have in effect stopped teaching Catholicism and have basically been teaching religious humanism instead. Kids haven't been taught much of anything about the authority of Scripture, Tradition, and Magisterium, about sexual morality, Transubstantiation, the consequences of sin, and the reality of Hell. Instead, they have learned about tolerance of neighbor, self-esteem, and little else. They are victims of spiritual censorship — but the ACLU isn't rushing to their defense. Meanwhile, many pastors have been taking the same approach in their homilies and parish "renewal" programs.

People fed this pabulum who haven't simply dropped out of the Church now seem to constitute the bulk of Catholics in certain dioceses. Is Milwaukee one such diocese? It certainly sounds like it, given what its liberal Archbishop, Rembert Weakland, admits. He reports in an article in *America* that the majority of Catholics in his jurisdiction "seem to ignore much of the church's teaching on sexuality," and "the word 'magisterium' is not in their vocabulary" and wasn't part of their religious instruction. They perhaps "dabble a bit in some New Age thinking," but "have read nothing" written by the Pope. They want a spirituality that doesn't "put guilt trips on them" and a Church that's "more flexible" than it already is. Is Weakland troubled by this? Hardly. He regards these slothful Catholics as the "vital force" in his archdiocese, and he'd like his "pastoral leaders" to "model the flexibility" being called for by these people!

You don't have to be a rocket scientist to see a pattern: Liberal religious educators and pastors dumb down Catholics, and then liberal bishops redefine ignorance and sloth as "vitality" and call for more "flexibility" — i.e., more ignorance and sloth. This is a prescription for the suicide of Catholicism.

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■ ABROAD ■

Our Gang

The trouble with the KLA.

MARK ALMOND

SLOBODAN MILOSEVIC'S forces have retreated from the smoldering ruins of Kosovo. But the replacement for Belgrade's brutal misrule has not been a NATO-led force imposing Western standards of democracy and human rights—the ideals proclaimed by Bill Clinton and Tony Blair during the war. Deployment of the full contingent of NATO peacekeepers has been painfully slow. And the U.N.-sponsored police force for the province is even more notional. Instead, the force on the ground is the Kosovo Liberation Army.

The KLA is the big winner in NATO's war against Milosevic; its leaders are now determined not to lose the peace. Even as NATO troops moved into Kosovo, the KLA was rushing its forces ahead of them to seize the political initiative. KLA representatives have occupied the administrative posts vacated by Serb officials, and also filled the positions that might have been taken by the forces of local Albanian rivals like the pacifist Ibrahim Rugova, sidelined by the war.

A motley group of cheerleaders from State Department spokesman Jamie Rubin to the *Wall Street Journal*'s editorial writers has endorsed the KLA and especially its youthful self-proclaimed prime minister, Hashim Thaci, as the way forward for Kosovo. There can be little doubt that Thaci intends to lead Kosovo in the future and has a very good chance of doing so. Whether the West should rejoice at the prospect is another question.

The KLA's propaganda presents the group as emerging in response to Serb repression in the mid 1990s. In fact, its roots lie in an anti-Yugoslav movement created in the early 1980s by the Stalinist-nationalist regime of Enver Hoxha in neighboring Albania. Thaci's uncle was an activist in this self-declared Marxist-Leninist liberation movement. It was quickly neutralized by the Yugoslav secret police, which then still had many Albanian-speaking officers loyal to the Titoite regime. Indeed, part of the folly of the Serb nationalism sponsored by Milosevic is that it helped to unite the Kosovo Albanians against Belgrade.

Some commentators who acknowledge the Communist roots of the KLA argue that the West need not worry about such ideological hangovers in a post–Cold War world. True, the economic absurdities of Marxism may no longer figure on the KLA's agenda for the future of Kosovo, but a different sort of economics obtains.

The KLA has been widely accused by West European police forces of involvement in drug-running as a way of funding its armed struggle. One reason that the Czech Republic, one of NATO's new members, was so unenthusiastic about the allied cause was the exposure in the Czech press at the beginning of the war of a drug-running ring in Prague linked to the KLA.

Of course, banditry and national liberation have gone hand in hand on all sides in the Balkans for as long as anyone can remember—and elsewhere as well. Those who romanticize the KLA as selfless freedom fighters and bristle at any suggestion that the group funds itself out of racketeering are as naïve as fundraisers for Noraid who think that the IRA hasn't supplemented its income over the years through bank robberies and protection money.

What has changed recently is that, from Colombia to Kosovo, Marxist guerrilla groups have accepted the transition from Maoism to the market. Unfortunately, their preferred product is light, white powder that is easy to ship and very healthy for the cash flow. Even the rivalries between different émigré national-liberation movements that share the same core beliefs can be explained by their competition for the profits from Europe's black-market economy.

For instance, surely the Kurdish PKK—an ethnic group waging its own struggle for liberation in Turkey—would have backed the KLA? But PKK sympathizers were among the most vocal critics of the NATO war. It was not just Ankara's pro-NATO, anti-Serb line that shifted the PKK against the KLA, it was a turf war between the KLA's fundraisers in Western Europe and the PKK's. In the last few years, Kosovar and Kurdish mafiosi have been fighting to control the drug and prostitution rackets of many big West European cities.

"I FORGET... ARE WE PROTECTING ALBANIAN REFUGEES FROM SERB ATTACKS OR SERB REFUGEES FROM ALBANIAN ATTACKS?"

Mr. Almond is a lecturer in modern history at Oriel College, Oxford.

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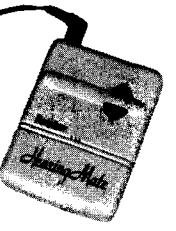

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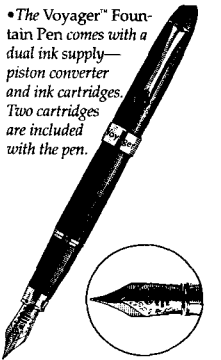

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After the mayhem in Kosovo, to expect the region to pick up the pieces and return to normal is naïve. But what was normality there in any case? As in a dozen other places across the post-Communist world, even with the best will in the world, Kosovo's new rulers are beginning with a legacy of mismanagement and repression.

Take Chechnya as a possible model for Kosovo's future. Just like the rebellious Russian province, Kosovo looks set to exist in an international limbo run by warlords. Neither truly a part of Russia nor yet independent, Chechnya finds itself in a halfway status that suits the sort of people who—for all their nationalistic rhetoric—find a legal Never-Never Land very congenial for their type of business. Kosovo too stands at the crossroads of drug—and people—smuggling from the Middle East to Europe.

Albania itself is another template for Kosovo's future. It is an example of a lawless "state," and many Kosovar refugees experienced it firsthand during the crisis. The refugees were not always received with solidarity and generosity. The local Albanian mafia battened on them, demanding protection money or trying to recruit destitute girls for their prostitution rackets in Italy.

Many of the key international bureaucrats who are slated to run Kosovo have served time in Albania since its collapse into chaos and gang-warfare in 1997. In Albania, these international administrators and European Union peacekeepers were satisfied to appease gangsters and corrupt policemen. The pattern can be expected to repeat itself in Kosovo.

The KLA may have agreed to demilitarize but in practice this means it is going to transform itself into the local police—just in time for running local elections. Meanwhile, the combination of a shattered society and the inflow of humanitarian aid is likely to provide a honey pot for the corrupt and those who feel their service in the KLA deserves reward. It was ever so.

History teaches us not to be surprised, and also reminds us not to ignore the downside of NATO's victory. In all likelihood, the fragile Balkans are witnessing the establishment of another mafia statelet. The Kosovo tragedy thus continues. **NR**

■ THE LAW ■

More Supreme than Ever

The Court rules in its own favor.

HADLEY ARKES

A THOUGHT-EXPERIMENT, not so implausible: A Clintonesque candidate for governor in one of the states proclaims his interest in reducing medical costs by having the state sell "off label" drugs—starting with Viagra. As a result of the recent round of decisions by the Supreme Court, Pfizer, the manufacturer of Viagra, would not be able to sue to protect its patent under federal law. Thanks to the Reagan and Bush appointees to the Court, the state would now be insulated by its "sovereign immunity" under the Eleventh Amendment. That amendment bars private litigants from bringing lawsuits against the states in federal courts. But it has posed a puzzle since its advent in 1795, and the question now is just what is so "conservative" in these recent decisions produced by so-called conservative judges.

The problem of patents arose this term in the case of *College Savings Bank* v. *Florida Prepaid Postsecondary Education Expense Board*. The State of Florida, in arranging packages for the payment of tuition in college, had trespassed on a "methodology" that was patented by the College Savings Bank in Princeton, N.J. For compelling reasons, the authority to issue patents was assigned, under the Constitution, to the federal government. But that constitutional authority could be made a nullity if the holders of patents could not vindicate their rights in federal courts when the patents were infringed by states.

In the same way, we would expect that if Congress can impose a minimum wage on certain establishments, that law would apply to employees of a state if they fell into the classes covered by the law (the problem posed in a parallel case, *Alden* v. *Maine*). The law on minimum wages is not particularly defensible, but if Congress has the authority to enact such a law, it seems neither politically wholesome nor tenable in principle to exempt the states from the laws that are binding on the rest of us. Far better to recruit the power of the states in resisting those laws—unless, of course, something in the Constitution erects a barrier to the reach of federal power when it comes to the states.

But how could such a barrier be put in place without undermining the very logic of a national government? There has always been an uneasy mixture in the logic of "state sovereignty." The separate states were never sovereign in international affairs; no foreign nations ever sent ambassadors to Massachusetts or Rhode Island. But in theory, the powers of the federal government in domestic affairs were "delegated" by the states, and the national government was one of "enumerated" powers. The Eleventh Amendment arose precisely because the first Supreme Court denied that there could be "sovereign immunity" in this sense: that a state could refuse to make itself accountable to a single person defending his interests in a lawsuit.

The case was *Chisholm* v. *Georgia* (1793), and it produced two of the most stirring arguments for "natural rights" that can be found in that period. Justice James Wilson pointed out that the very term "sovereign" was derived from feudalism and bound up with the assumptions of legal positivism: namely, that law was simply the rule prescribed, or "posited," by the commands of the Sovereign. But in America, said Wilson, the law would be placed on a radically different foundation: "The pure source of equality and justice must be founded on the *consent* of those whose obedience they require. The Sovereign, when traced to his source, must be found in the man."

This premise of natural rights transformed the problem of suing a state. For, by a "state," we would then mean: the free citizens who make up the political

Mr. Arkes is professor of jurisprudence at Amherst College.

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community known as, say, Delaware. Under the Constitution, one state may sue another, but as Chief Justice John Jay suggested, that means essentially that all of the citizens of Delaware may sue all of the citizens of Pennsylvania. But if "all" can sue "all," then either such "all" may sue the "all" of the other state.

In *Chisholm*, Wilson and Jay condensed their argument to a syllogism and produced a decision that still cannot be refuted. The political class at the time recoiled from it and passed the Eleventh Amendment. If the amendment means anything, it must mean something close to what the conservative judges have said in these latest cases. Yet it is a pity that the arguments of *Chisholm* are recalled only by the liberal dissenters—by people like David Souter, who do not have the least respect for the doctrine of natural rights that those first jurists were trying to teach. The deeper melancholy is that none of the conservatives thought that anything in Wilson's and Jay's opinions was even worth mentioning. For the result of granting states this immunity is still implausible and perhaps even perverse.

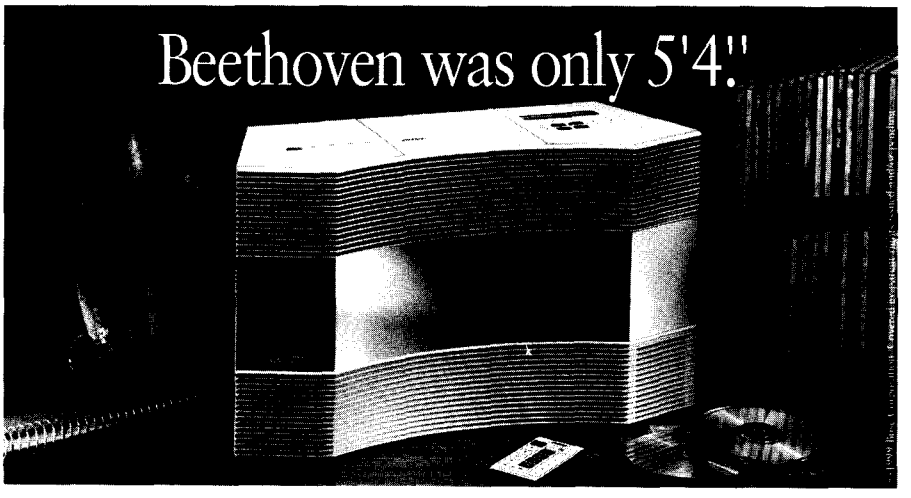
Take again the case on patents. Congress derives its power to issue patents under Article I of the Constitution. But over several years, the Court has held that the powers of Congress under Article I may not be used to override the "sovereign immunity" of the states. Congress may override that immunity, it has said, only in exercising its Fourteenth Amendment power to enforce the requirement that states grant all persons the due process and equal protection of the law. And even there, the Court has insisted that Congress could formulate remedies only when the courts find that constitutional rights have been denied. In the case of patents, the judges did not agree that there was a constitutional violation to be remedied because there were only a handful of cases in which states ran afoul of the laws on patents. But why should the number of cases matter? Congress can surely protect patents lawfully granted, and the Court concedes that in this field, there is no immunity to lawsuits brought by individuals. Why then should the Court insert itself here as a kind of regulator, to determine when legislation is permitted?

The justices could have argued that Congress is free to protect patents—but not by authorizing private lawsuits against a state. Congress could enforce its policy by authorizing the attorney general to bring suits against the officers of a state. The Eleventh Amendment would no longer be in play because private litigants would not be involved; it would mainly restrict the ability of judges to collude with private litigants to subvert the policies of a state. As Justice Anthony Kennedy suggested, the object of the Eleventh Amendment may be to preserve the integrity of the political process in the separate states. If the voters and their representatives settle upon a policy, that policy should be overturned only by a political process at a higher level.

But that argument against the power of the courts is not the one that the judges have concentrated their wit in explaining, and indeed their arguments have pointed in a rather different direction. On the surface, the Court claims to be shoring up the authority of the states against the national government. But the real import of these cases is that the judiciary is again cutting back on the power of Congress in relation to the courts. In a telling sign, the Court leans on its precedent, two years ago, in *City of Boerne* v. *Flores*, when the Court struck down the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. The concern then was that Congress had gone beyond the Court's interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment and upended many local laws.

Yet there was no such concern when the Court in a stroke swept away the laws banning abortion in all the states. More recently, the Court showed no inhibitions about "sovereign immunity" when it decided that the states would be held accountable for acts of sexual harassment carried out by fifth graders. The sober truth emerges when we recognize that Congress would never have acted in this way. Congress has ever been more sensitive to local interests, and it has been the most reliable protector of federalism in the national government.

Under the banner then of protecting the states, the Court has really weakened the main counterweight to the Court itself in imposing policies on the states. Behind the slogans of limited government, the limits have been dismantled even further. **NR**



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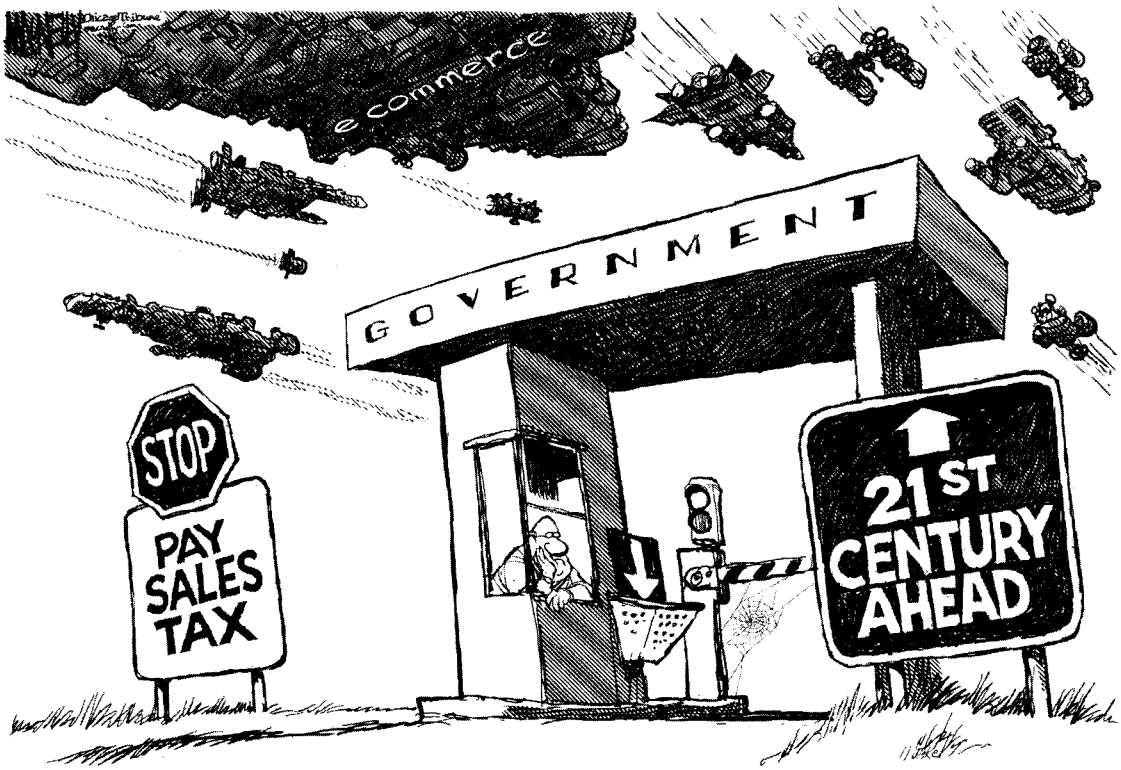

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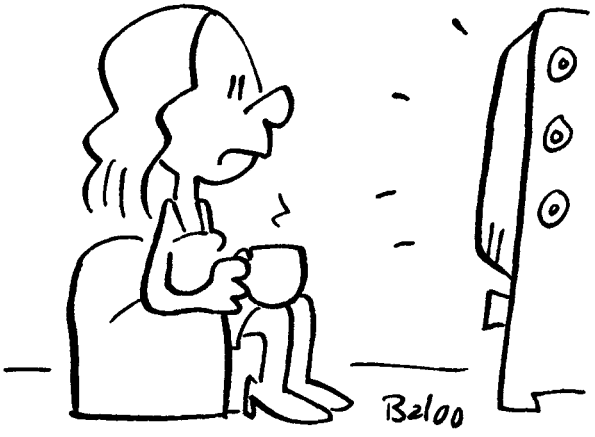

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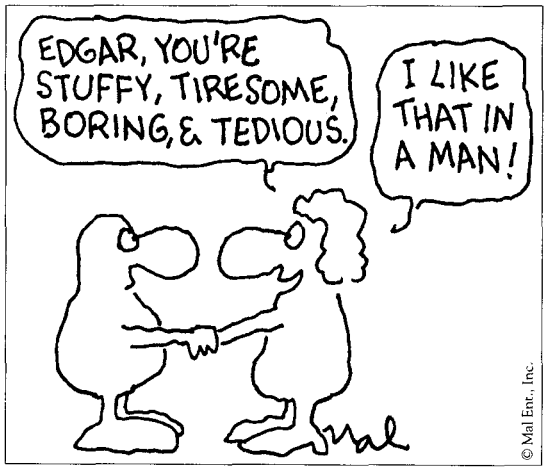

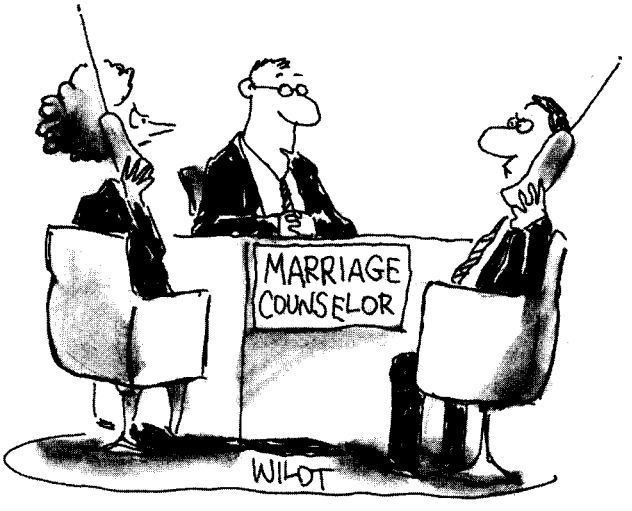

"Okay—at the count of three we put down the phones and communicate directly."

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The Gay Moment

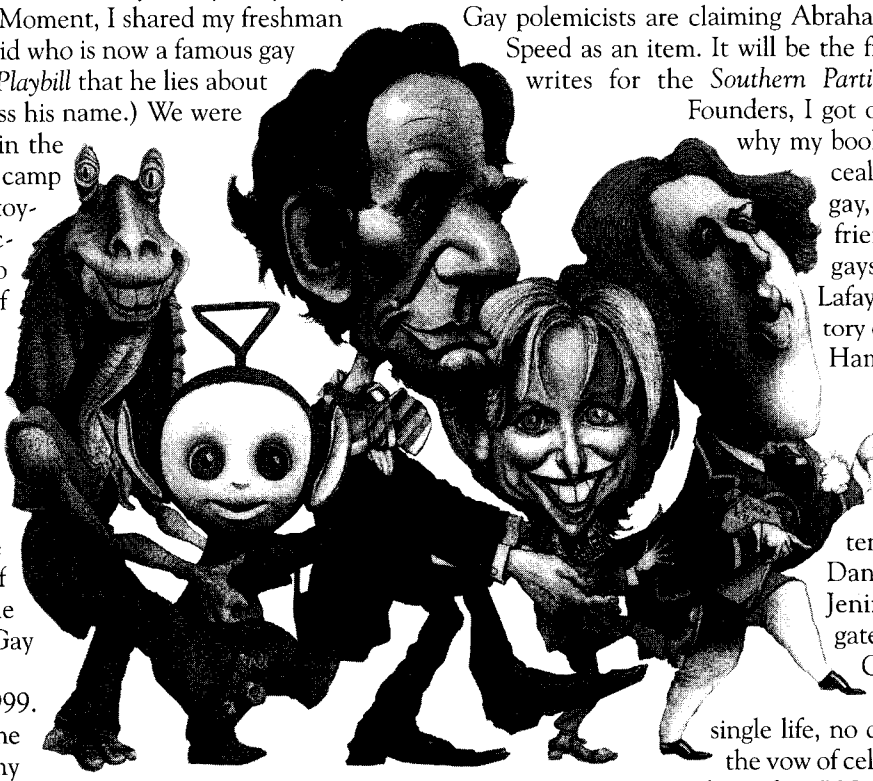
It's a pink, pink world.

RICHARD BROOKHISER

FROM time to time, an American minority group enjoys a "moment." Moments can last for decades, at least for a number of years. In its Moment the group takes center stage; its doings, habits, and preoccupations interest the nation. Every headset picks up the frequency. The simplest thing to do is just lie back and listen in quietly; it is impossible not to listen at all.

The moment we are in now is the Gay Moment. The Gay Moment can be explained and defined, though it is easier to describe, and easiest simply to experience. That is the quality of Moments—they are out there, just beyond your eyelids.

Years before the Gay Moment, I shared my freshman suite at college with a kid who is now a famous gay playwright. (I see from *Playbill* that he lies about his age, so I will suppress his name.) We were the grossest mismatch in the class of '77. He had a camp sensibility; I read Dostoyevsky and taped a picture of Solzhenitsyn to my door. The bath of lukewarm water between us was the son of a dentist. One day I overheard the future playwright murmur, "Lesley Gore: She was a *goddess*!" Then I had no notion what he meant. But now of course I know. Anyone would know. It's the Gay Moment.



Flash forward to 1999. The last weekend of June was coming up, and my trainer was not happy about it. The source of his funk was the Gay Pride Parade, which takes over Fifth Avenue. He himself is gay, living in Chelsea, weekending on Fire Island. But the parade clogs the sidewalks, and strikes him as too solemn and political. "Why can't it be more like Carnival?" he asked. Thirty years ago, drag queens were rioting in Village bars against police harassment. Now my trainer criticizes the sensibility of one of the city's largest parades. It's the Gay Moment.

Is Jar Jar Binks, a creature in *The Phantom Menace*, gay? In the wake of Ellen DeGeneres and Tinky Winky the Teletubby, this question has been seriously discussed. The national conversation on sexual orientation has moved from a comedienne to a toddler-surrogate with an antenna on his head to a digitalized monster, long ago and far away. With omnipresence comes triviality. Forget whether Disney gives benefits to the companions of gay employees. In the Gay Moment, it's only a matter of time before the Mouse does a contemporary fairy tale.

Turning to the dead, who has a closet in his coffin this week? Gay polemicists are claiming Abraham Lincoln and Joshua Speed as an item. It will be the first time Larry Kramer writes for the *Southern Partisan*. Concerning the Founders, I got one angry letter asking why my book on Washington concealed the fact that he was gay, as evidenced by his friendship with "known gays" like Hamilton and Lafayette. Washington's history of sober flirtations, and Hamilton's history of less sober ones, make this merely absurd. On the other hand, I did a double take when I read this contemporary description of Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer, a Maryland delegate to the Constitutional Convention. "From his long continuance in single life, no doubt but he has made the vow of celibacy. He speaks warmly of the Ladies notwithstanding." No one would have given this a second look 20 years ago, or probably 200 years ago. But in the Gay Moment?

There have been two previous Moments in the 20th century. Irish Catholics had one from about 1900 to World War II; Jews followed them, until yesterday. The Irish Moment crystallized around athletes, actors, pols, and cops—tough guys you liked. A typical figure was Fr. Francis P. Duffy, chap-

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lain of the 165th Infantry ("The Fighting Irish") in World War I. There is a statue of him in Times Square. He grips a Bible; he could knock your block off; he is smiling. The Jewish Moment threw up comics, writers, and intellectuals—wise guys you liked. A typical figure was Saul Bellow, whose style was criticized, when he first appeared, as "Yinglish." But this was in fact its allure, rattling like an express subway train from con men to Nietzsche.

These Moments are over. Here and there you can find stragglers—Irish bond traders in dark downtown restaurants, knocking back scotches and insulting one another and themselves; Jewish psychoanalysts, empathic, critical, and neurotic as their patients. But no one cares. They have lost the ear of America. John F. Kennedy's election in 1960, as Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote in *Beyond the Melting Pot*, was not the culmination of the Irish Moment, but its tombstone. When did Jews vanish? When Woody Allen married Soon-Yi? When Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated? No matter, they are gone. Jackie Mason tends the cemetery.

What are the common traits of groups in their Moments? Irish, Jews, and gays all have high verbal skills—essential for attracting attention, stimulating and entertaining the national audience. A group in its Moment is one to which, as Arthur Miller put it, attention must be paid. The verbalists occupied similarly oblique positions—accepted enough to be comprehensible, still remote enough to be piquant.

Each group also deployed what political scientist Kenneth Minogue called "suffering situations," to elicit sympathy and induce guilt. Irish, Jews, and gays all experienced varying degrees of hatred here which, as soon as it began to diminish, they cherished and used to manipulate their more numerous neighbors. For each group, a great disaster became the shorthand image of their suffering—the Famine, the Holocaust, AIDS. These crises, though horrific, are strictly speaking irrelevant to their problems in America, since the first two happened elsewhere and the third was self-inflicted. But during a Moment no one can make this point; after a Moment passes, nobody bothers to try.

A friend hearing me explain the theory of Moments wondered what it meant that the first two groups were religions, while the third is a sexuality. A good point, though gayness in the Gay Moment has many qualities of a religion. Gaydom today is a faith-based community. The central tenet of the faith is a creation myth, about how gays got that way. The orthodox belief is that any man or woman self-defined as gay was gay from birth or infancy; he or she "always knew it." For many gays this describes both their belief and their reality; for many others this is a subjective feeling only, and will one day be recognized as such, though that day won't come any time soon. Tony Kushner, author of *Angels in America*, is a rare gay figure who has entertained heresy: In one interview he expressed the belief that everyone, gay and not, was "traumatized" into his sexuality. He used a lurid verb, but correctly referred to a process. Most of us are born with many paths open; the great majority take the hetero highway; some go here and there. But there are more scenarios available—and will and chance play a larger role in the outcome—than we now imagine.

Moderate gay writers like Bruce Bawer, who take contrarian stances within the gay world—for religion, against promiscuity—are amazingly obtuse on this point. They have the psychological insight of doorjambs. In Bawer's *A Place At the Table*, he presented as if it were a knockout argument the commandment, "Believe what we say about ourselves." So, a century after Matthew Arnold heard the melancholy, long, withdrawing roar of the Sea of Faith, and at a time when everything has been questioned, from God to the atom, we must believe only what gays say about themselves. Of course we must. It is the Gay Moment.

Gays appeared at this Moment for the same reason that modern feminism developed: the erosion of bourgeois patriarchy following World War II, not in the much-criticized Sixties, but in the Forties and Fifties. Bourgeois patriarchs

Gayness in the Gay Moment has many qualities of a religion. Gaydom today is a faith-based community.

had already given up many of the powers of their Biblical role models: the right to own slaves, for instance, or to execute members of their own families (see Genesis 38:24). Theirs was a patriarchy modified by Protestant religion, republican government, and the work ethic. By concentrating too much authority in governmental and corporate leaders, the warfare/welfare state and the grey flannel suit (as George W. S. Trow has argued) may have deprived patriarchs of one prop too many. Feminism arose when women decided that they had to fend for themselves. Gayness as a movement arose from men looking for lost maleness in all the wrong places. If Father doesn't know best, then maybe Tom of Finland does.

Another wrong place where men looked for maleness in the postwar world was sexual predation. Hugh Hefner airbrushed it, Woodstock took it back to the land. But beyond the surfaces, cool or flower-bedecked, there began a war of all against all, which rages still in every college dormitory and bar in the land. Battle fatigue is intense. Some of the fatigued decide to become gay themselves: The young woman who is a lesbian until graduation is a common enough phenomenon to have become a figure of fun. The normal majority (they cannot be called the moral majority: Morality is normally too spotty), once they overcome their squeamishness, seek out gay friends and the gay imaginary companions supplied by the media as symbolic non-combatants. They may not want to join them, but they are soothed by knowing that they exist. They visit gayness like the escaped prisoners of war in fleeing to neutral Switzerland at the end of *Grand Illusion*. The sexual turmoil in which so many gay men live—worse even than their own—they conveniently ignore.

The other thing gays offer the nation as a whole in this Moment is high gloss—their answer to Irish moxie and Jewish mockery. It is strange how living in a place like Manhattan, which sucks in gays like a whirlpool and puts them to work, creating and designing, can alter one's standards of execution. I went upstate several Christmases ago to a 125-year-old family-run resort that holds a mammoth tree-trimming ceremony

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for kids and their parents. The tables were covered with construction paper, scissors, glitter, glue, and Magic Markers. The tree was heavy with the resulting productions. Making them must have been fun, but the poor tree was a mess. Of course: All the work had been done by heterosexuals. G. K. Chesterton wisely wrote that anything worth doing is worth doing badly. Not a thought for the Gay Moment.

There is a specter haunting the Gay Moment: the specter of bisexuality. The *New York Observer*, a weekly newspaper for which I write, recently ran a long story ("Hey! Yeah, *You*! What's Your Gay Quotient?" by George Gurley) in which the author posited a sliding scale of sexuality, and wandered like Candide through Manhattan asking people what percentage of gayness they thought they had in them. A few said zero, and one confident young man said 101 percent (why so insistent?). But most rambled happily in the single digits and the teens or the eighties and nineties. "I'd have to say I'm probably, like, 90 percent," admitted a man drinking a frozen Cosmopolitan in a gay bar. "I had a girlfriend many years ago, and I already knew I was gay at the time, but I did have this girlfriend. I don't think that would happen again, but it's not impossible." This is the world described in the movie *Chasing Amy*, when the gay heroine announces that if love is her guide, then she must love even the man she has become attracted to. If we're supposed to believe what people say, what do we believe when they say this? It would be strange if the gay orthodoxy of sexual determinism were to be undermined by eros.

The real end will be boredom. Like the Irish and the Jews before them, gays will run out of things to say. The force field will collapse. People will realize that Oscar Wilde was a witty craftsman, not a great modernist; that Gore Vidal is a vain old chatterbox, not Henry Adams; that Lesley Gore was a mediocre pop singer, not a goddess. Some other well-spoken outsiders will audition for center stage. We'll all move on. **NR**

Hollywood, Littleton, and Us

How to think about the violence debate.

ROB LONG

JERRY SPRINGER, the Bill Clinton of talk-show hosts, had a problem. His show was taking flak for its violent content—a guest's two "secret lovers" would suddenly explode into flying fists, say, or a guest's wife and transvestite boyfriend would rocket out of their chairs, slapping and kicking—and after the Littleton massacre it must have seemed time to cool it.

Cool it he did, replacing a brace of racy episodes with older, tamer reruns. His ratings promptly took a dive. Vindicated, he is back to his old tricks and can now answer his pious critics with a simple, "I am giving the people what they want."

Bill Clinton, the Jerry Springer of presidents, had a problem. His administration was taking flak for its slavish devotion to Hollywood—the Lincoln Bedroom has accommodated more sleeping movie stars than the technical-awards presentation at the Oscars—and in the wake of Littleton, amid concerns about media violence, he needed to show that he is not in the pocket of an interest group.

Show it he did. He directed the Department of Justice to investigate the film industry's efforts to market movies to teenagers, and he called on the industry to "police" itself. He also attended a $2 million fundraiser at the home of a Hollywood mogul. Thus, like Jerry, he has done his part without undue strain.

Everyone, ultimately, will do his part. The people who are paid to fret about the First Amendment and censorship will do so, in congressional committees and on op-ed pages. (The people who are paid to fret about the *Second* Amendment will do likewise, but that's another story.) There will almost certainly be the passage of some kind of pointless legislation. And this could not be a serious social issue, and this could not be *fin de siècle* America, without an incoherent televised debate in which an Entertainment Industry Smoothie will stop the discussion in its tracks by looking doe-eyed at the camera and asking, "Is *Saving Private Ryan* violent? You bet! Is *Schindler's List* violent? Yes, Ted, it is. But do I want my kids to know about World War II and the unspeakable horror of the Holocaust? Yes, Ted, I do. By God, I do. And if that makes me a bad parent, then so be it!" At that point, a Noted Shrink will chime in with a "help your kids manage their anger" jag, and a Christian Media Critic will try to smile warmly (just like the media consultant told him to) and hold his hands out, palms up (just like the media consultant told him to), and say, "Ted, all we're asking for is information. Parents need information about the movies and shows and video games their children are watching." Pretty soon, that'll be over and *Friends* will be on.

What no one will talk about is the impossibility of regulating the hundreds—soon, maybe, thousands—of channels piped into television sets all over the country. What no one will talk about is that broadcast television—the only form of TV over which the federal government has any real leverage, via the FCC-licensing process—is remarkably free of violent content, preferring on the whole to concentrate on smutty and crass sexual innuendo. Cable television, especially on the premium channels, makes for a lucrative market in both soft-core pornography *and* nihilistic violence, but cable is a paid-for service. You get it only if you pay for it—about 50 bucks a month for the basic package, where I live—so regulating the content is not only a constitutional can of worms, it's also

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kind of strange, like demanding that the government allow you to buy the fat-laden mayonnaise but prevent you from eating it once you get home. (Though that concept gets increasingly less strange as the years unfold. See, for instance, the tobacco debate.)

Focusing on the "violence" in an episode of *Jerry Springer* is a perfect indication of how wrongheaded most media critics are. A couple of drag queens flailing away at each other, or two guys swinging wide-of-the-mark fists over a plump, unattractive girl, is hardly the root cause of the current wave of adolescent freak-outs. The really sick thing about the Springer show isn't the fisticuffs. It's the cruelty: People ambush their girlfriends and boyfriends (sometimes both in the same show) with revelations and confessions designed to destroy them. It's hard to keep in mind, what with the screaming and the air-pumping, but some poor schmo is always left out of the joke. Some real person is sitting in a television studio getting his feelings trampled on in the most callous way, usually fighting back tears while the tormentor wears a kind of half-proud, half-embarrassed smile. Even drag queens and hoochie girls deserve better.

Rather than worry about the effect a few *Jerry Springer* mêlées have on our kids, we should be appalled by the show's cheerful, audience-pleasing cruelty. What, I wonder, do kids make of *that?*

Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris, the two boys from Littleton who gleefully murdered their schoolmates last spring, kicked off our latest national discussion on media violence, but it's clear that this discussion will eventually run the talkers hoarse. Like one of those college-dorm debates, this one will double back on itself a few times ("Hey, isn't the *news* violent?") before it peters out. The huge gush of entertainment product that floods into our houses every day is impossible to sort through, label, rate, and censor. Besides, as Jerry (and Bill) discovered, people *like* their crappy entertainment culture, it makes a whole lot of money, and with a whole lot of money you can buy a very nice president.

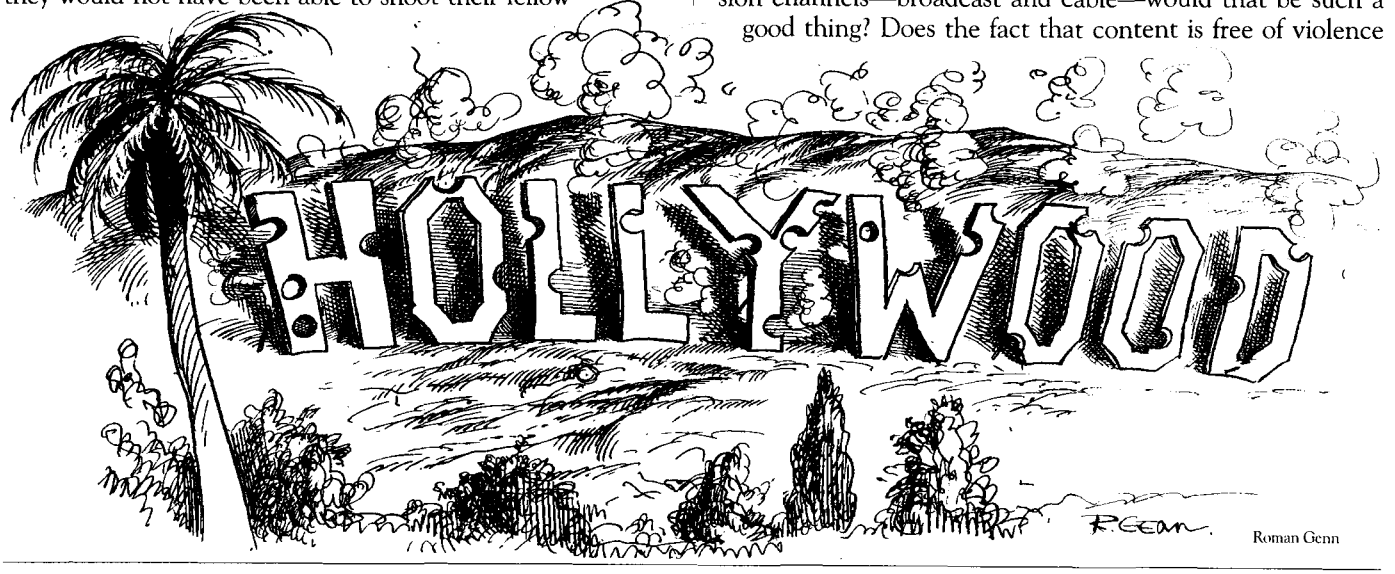
And while one finger points at Hollywood, the other points at Smith & Wesson. Gun control may or may not be a good thing, and it is certainly true, as gun-control advocates rotely and routinely tell us, that if Klebold and Harris hadn't had guns, they would not have been able to shoot their fellow students. But where do we place the blame for the evil deeds of other scary teens? The girl in New Jersey who secretly gave birth during her senior prom, dumped the baby in the trash, and returned to her salad? The boy who raped and murdered a little girl in a Nevada casino bathroom while his buddy stood by?

You don't need a gun to be a sociopathic monster. It helps, of course, but all that's really necessary is the ability to tune out the suffering of another person. What the recent incidents of evil teen behavior have in common is the easy way these kids did just that. Who knows if the girl in New Jersey played violent video games? Who knows if the boy who raped the girl in the casino had seen *Natural Born Killers?* The average adolescent watches between three and four hours of television *a day*. He is responsible, almost single-handedly, for the most financially successful box-office year in Hollywood history. He is the backbone of the cash machine known as AOL. He knows how to tune in almost anything projected on a two-dimensional screen, and tune out almost everything real. The default setting on late-model adolescents is "entertain me."

It doesn't matter so much what, precisely, is on the screen. The very act of watching television encourages a kind of detached, passive, slack-jawed energy. It's easy to slip into an I-am-watching-myself-on-television trance, to drift away from the here and now, to freeze out the suffering of your schoolmates or the face of your newborn baby, if you've had enough practice flipping the remote control. Lots of violent movies and endless hours of video-game slaughter might help tip the transition into monsterhood, just as a gun within arm's reach offers itself up as a handy score-settler; *but it is the day-in–day-out practice of anesthetized viewership* that teaches the mind how to flick the "off" switch.

Michael Medved, the author and radio host, often asks his listeners to engage in a little thought experiment. Imagine, he says, that your favorite cultural critic (Bill Bennett, Pat Robertson, Gary Bauer, insert-favorite-scold-here) has taken control of the nation's televisions. Every single offering has been vetted and sanitized by your hero. Would you still care if your kid watched 20 hours a week?

The traditional "family hour" of television programming, the 7-to-9 P.M. safe haven, fell out of favor years ago. But assuming that family-hour programming returned to *all* television channels—broadcast and cable—would that be such a good thing? Does the fact that content is free of violence



Roman Genn

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and sex mean it's okay to watch 18 hours of it a week? It is a strange era indeed when the concept of "family hour" refers not to time spent with family but to time spent with television.

In the microscopic sifting of the teenage lives and torments of Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris, two weird details stick out. The first is that on that terrible morning one of their friends noticed they were absent from bowling class. A quick and easy way to check your sanity, reader, is to gauge your reaction to the phrase "bowling class." What used to be something one did for fun—that is, outside the realm of required courses, like Pre-Calculus and African-American Poetry—has now been nested inside the general curriculum. A culture that develops a way to sub-contract out Finding Something Mindless and Physical for the Kids to Do to the school system will also sub-contract out "family hour" to the broadcast networks, education to a computer attached to a phone line, and moral development to a giant purple dinosaur. And with those things taken care of, why not kick back and watch *Home Improvement*?

The second strange detail in the lives of Harris and Klebold is that, in a corner of Dylan's room, amid the violent props and sicko publications, was a small refrigerator. For convenient snacking, one supposes. It was a birthday gift, according to the *New York Times*, from Dylan's parents. So why bother leaving the room at all? Why not just stay in there, flipping through the channels and clicking through the Net, feeding when necessary from the handy icebox? Even if you wanted to, oh, *bowl* or something, why bother? You did that already in third period, right before "Voices and Visions: The History of the Land from the Native American Perspective."

How odd that the richest, healthiest, most blessed generation in the history of the world—a generation with no grim reality to escape from—buries itself alive in escapist entertainment. And how odd that the generation that raised them—itself the richest, healthiest, most blessed generation but one—can't muster the energy to turn off the set.

The entertainment industry is the hand that feeds me, of course, so far be it from me even to nip lightly on its knuckle. Those of us who make our monthly nut writing, directing, producing, and broadcasting televised entertainment are always being exhorted to "police" ourselves, as if somehow kids who watched 20 hours of "good, safe" entertainment a week would be less creepy and screwed up than kids who watched 20 hours of whatever swill is on.

Television, like alcohol and tobacco, is supposed to be diverting and entertaining in reasonable quantities. We don't control the dosage, and just as most parents would not justify allowing their children to smoke and drink because "they're only smoking Merit Lights and only drinking White Zinfandel," perhaps our current favorite easy fix ("100 Hours of Kid-Friendly Television—It's the Law!") is equally silly.

Hogarth's famous engraving *Gin Lane* portrays a London alley packed with reeling drunkards. Eyes like slits, mouths open, the wasted citizens lean against posts and languish in the gutters. Babies tumble from their mothers' arms and into the street. Dirty children crouch against buildings swigging booze. It's Family Hour, 18th-century-London-style, but with gin and ale instead of video games and the WB Network. All in all, gin is more healthful. And you can keep ice cubes and limes in the refrigerator in your kid's room. **NR**

Spike Lee, 'Artist'

The terrible career of a flamethrower.

JAMES BOWMAN

To the many interesting ways of dividing the world up into revealing dichotomies—innies and outies, over-the-roll people and under-the-roll people, Republicans and Democrats—let us add the division between self-proclaimed "art" lovers and those who are immediately suspicious when they hear the word "art." Most conservatives, I imagine, belong to the latter category, and one reason is suggested by the public reaction to the release of Spike Lee's *Summer of Sam*.

Criticized for exploiting the victims of the Son of Sam, the serial killer David Berkowitz who terrorized New York in the summer of 1977, Lee put forward his membership in the tribe of "artists" as if that alone were sufficient to still criticism. "I feel that we're artists," he said. "I don't think we can be put in a straitjacket all the time." And his case was taken up by most critics and others of the "artists" tribe, who circled the wagons with their usual efficiency.

Harold Schechter, a professor of literature at Queens College, for instance, cited on the op-ed page of the *New York Times* Henry James's essay "The Art of Fiction" to the effect that it is the fictional artist's (and therefore also the filmmaker's) absolute right to "touch the sad things of life." Schechter implicitly compared Lee's film to Theodore Dreiser's *American Tragedy*, whose story "was ripe for sleazy exploitation. But out of it Dreiser fashioned a masterpiece."

This and other works of art, Schechter claimed, cannot be criticized for being based on real crimes: "It's either a good book—or movie—or a bad one. But choosing the subject is the artist's prerogative." Curiously, he ventured no opinion on whether *Summer of Sam* is a good movie or a bad one. Instead, he confined himself to knocking down the straw man he himself had set up, the mythical critic who says that "choosing the subject" is not the artist's prerogative. But the complaint against Spike Lee was not that he had no right to choose this subject, but that he had chosen badly—in fact committing the "sleazy exploitation" that, according to Schechter, Dreiser avoided.

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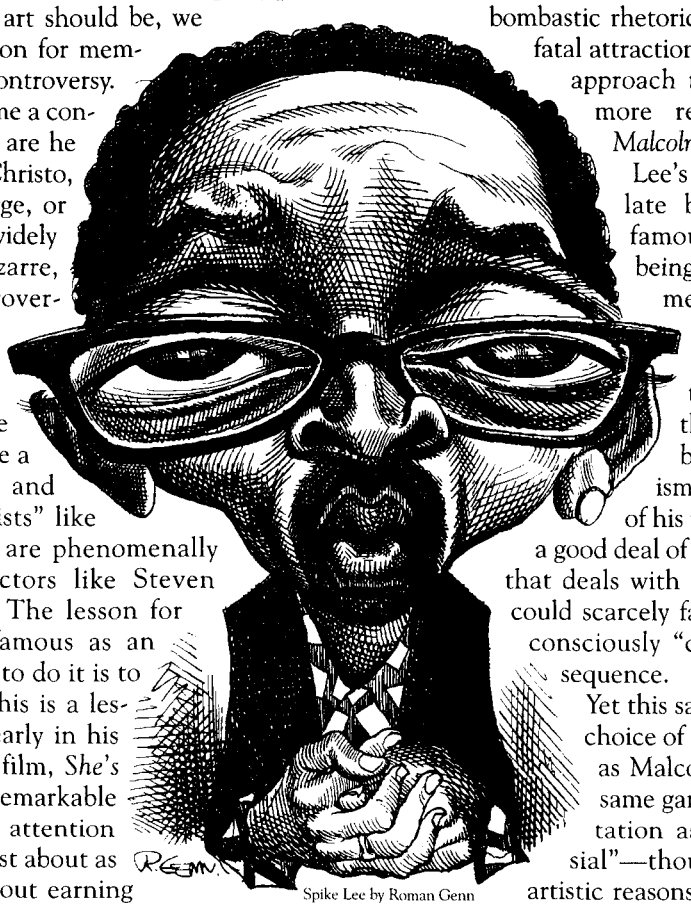
Joe Roth, chairman of Walt Disney Studios, whose Touchstone Pictures released the film, told the *Los Angeles Times* that "part of what you hope in these jobs is that you have relationships with artists who, in skirting the rules or running close to the rules, sometimes create great work"—leaving the distinct impression that the skirting of the rules is what makes them artists. But Roth too was non-committal about whether, in this case, a "great work" had been created by Spike Lee, whom he referred to as a "somewhat controversial artist."

In fact, both factions, "artists" and anti-"artists" alike, find it easy to make the assumption that merely being obscene or "controversial" qualifies one as an "artist." Lacking any positive sense of what a work of art should be, we have only one real qualification for membership in the tribe, which is controversy. Ask any casual observer to name a contemporary artist, and chances are he will name Andres Serrano, Christo, Jeff Koons, Gilbert and George, or perhaps Karen Finley. All are widely publicized for being bizarre, obscene, or otherwise "controversial," but what other publicity is available?

In the same way, ask anyone who doesn't take a close interest in the movies to name a contemporary film director, and you are as likely to get "artists" like Lee or Oliver Stone as you are phenomenally successful commercial directors like Steven Spielberg or George Lucas. The lesson for anyone who wants to be famous as an "artist" is that the surest way to do it is to be controversial. Certainly, this is a lesson that Spike Lee learned early in his career with his first feature film, *She's Gotta Have It* (1986), an unremarkable bit of juvenilia that attracted attention for representing sexual acts just about as explicitly as you can do without earning an X rating.



Spike Lee by Roman Genn

Since then, Lee has become a celebrity and so has been able to cultivate "controversy" offscreen in the media by making outrageous comments—often timed to coincide with the release of a new picture—such as that he would like to take a Louisville Slugger to black Republicans. His most recent such comments revealed that he thought Mayor Giuliani of New York "evil" and that Charlton Heston ought to be shot with a .44-caliber Bulldog—David Berkowitz's weapon. He later ambiguously backed away from both of these remarks, saying, for instance, that he had been "only joking" about the shooting of Heston and that he had intended to be "ironic."

At his best, as in the early films *School Daze* (1988), *Do the Right Thing* (1989), and *Jungle Fever* (1991), Lee used a similar sort of ambiguity to qualify the radical statements he almost made. Was it right for young black men to sacrifice their chances for an education and thus for personal success in order to protest against apartheid? Was "the right thing" for them to express their anger at bigotry and social injustice by rioting or not? Was interracial romance between blacks and whites to be encouraged or deplored? Viewers of these movies could not be entirely sure which way they were being led because Lee himself was not sure.

His ambiguity was the source of both the good and the bad in these films. It allowed him to examine these "controversial" subjects with some sense of their moral nuances and thus with seriousness and honesty. But his tendency to pull back from the logic of his own radicalism suggests a certain love of bombastic rhetoric for its own sake, and it is this fatal attraction that has disfigured much of his approach to controversy in many of his more recent films, beginning with *Malcolm X* (1992).

Lee's epic treatment of the life of the late black leader began with the famous videotape of Rodney King being beaten by Los Angeles policemen intercut with shots of the burning of an American flag. It was as if Lee were advertising the fact that serious attention to the character of Malcolm was to be subordinated to sensationalism. People might miss the artistry of his portrait of his hero (and there is a good deal of it, at least in the part of the film that deals with Malcolm's early life), but they could scarcely fail to see it in anything so self-consciously "controversial" as this opening sequence.

Yet this same rhetorical overkill made his choice of subject particularly appropriate, as Malcolm himself was a player of the same game, who also got himself a reputation as both tribal and "controversial"—though for political rather than artistic reasons. In the opening sequence, the beating of Rodney King and the burning of the flag were accompanied on the soundtrack by Malcolm's absurdly hyperbolical rhetoric: "I charge the White Man with being the greatest murderer on this earth; I charge the White Man with being the greatest kidnapper/robber/enslaver/swine-eater on this earth. I'm not an American; you're not an American. You're one of twenty-two million victims of America. We've never seen democracy; we only see hypocrisy."

Why did Lee choose as his hero a man whose contribution to black civil rights, such as it was, was entirely rhetorical rather than someone, like Martin Luther King, who had genuine and indisputable accomplishments to his credit? The answer is that Malcolm's "controversial" rhetoric made him the more visible representative of the black tribe. Ironically, Louis Farrakhan, who has never satisfactorily dissociated himself from Malcolm's murderers, occupies the same posi-

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tion today. Though Malcolm was himself the only casualty of the revolution he is purported to have led, he dominates the popular iconography with that menacing gesture in which he holds up the automatic rifle and exclaims: "By any means necessary!"

That adverbial expression detached from any context emphasizes that it is anything, everything, and therefore nothing in particular that we are to understand as being done "by any means necessary." The vagueness about ends contrasts oddly with the insistence about means. Yet it is worth remembering how much of black culture is still built around the fantasies of the powerless. To those who are used to helplessness, the end *is* the means. Not only did Malcolm never fire his automatic rifle, it was never meant to be fired—only to appear on T-shirts as a sign of impotent but unassuageable anger.

And the impotence is inseparable from the anger, also expressed in the violent fantasies of controversialists and would-be artists like Ice-T or Sister Souljah. Its fantastical and symbolic quality makes it matter for art rather than politics—which for black people is itself largely reduced to the performance art of events like Farrakhan's Million Man March. Naturally the march proved irresistible to Spike Lee. His *Get on the Bus* (1996) is a tribute to the marchers that begins with a bus driver announcing the separation of the sheep from the goats: "What tribe do you belong to anyway? Shaka Zulu's or Clarence Thomas's?"

One is not persuaded that Spike Lee has ever undertaken a study of Thomas's jurisprudence, but Thomas is a danger to the tribally minded because he threatens, both by word and example, their impotence and therefore its attached and self-identifying anger. In the same way, Get *On the Bus* features one black Republican, a Lexus dealer from Memphis who annoys everybody not only by using the N-word but also by insisting that his fellow black travelers "love to talk about what they're going to do—I'm a-goin' to do this, I'm a-goin' to do that" while they "ain't going to do a goddamn thing. That's why they like Farrakhan."

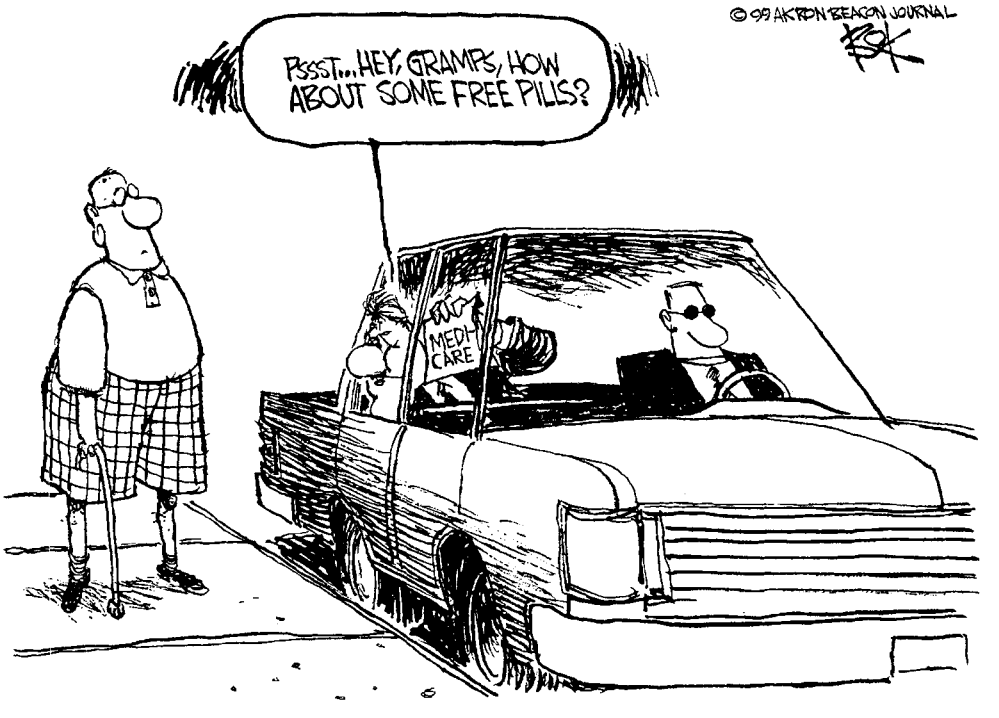
The others throw him off the bus.

Lee did briefly take up the subject of impotent fantasy in *Girl 6* (1996), whose heroine spends her life catering to the fantasies of rich white men who use phone-sex services while she indulges in some fantasizing of her own about success as an actress. Unfortunately, Lee's characteristic inability to make an unequivocally radical statement leaves us with the impression that he actually believes in the latter kind of fantasy, if not the former.

In *Summer of Sam* there is hardly even a pretense of seriousness. All that is left is the factitious "controversy" (assisted by the comments about Heston and Giuliani), an unconnected portrait of a marriage between the lovely Mira Sorvino and a compulsively unfaithful husband played by John Leguizamo and a banal message about how people who are different—punk rockers, for example—are often the victims of mass hysteria in search of a scapegoat. The film's graphic representation of the murders committed by David Berkowitz is completely gratuitous.

The artist who proclaimed in the press that his purpose was to show us the kind of "insanity" that the Son of Sam murders occasioned in 1977 would have been better advised to keep them offscreen, as they were for the moronic Bronx Italians whom he represents as having been driven to the brink of insanity by them. But the "artist" whose first artistic duty is to get noticed needs to show us the blood on the car windows in order to create the kind of buzz that sells tickets. Once the audience has settled in, however, there is nothing but such sensationalism to see. Apart from the simplistic and Clintonesque moral about learning to tolerate those who are "different," the film is little more than a collection of music-video moments.

These include equally gratuitous displays of "cool" images that have little or nothing to do with one another or with anything else except The Product—in this case the movie itself. These images—of disco dancing and murder, marital sex and flamboyant promiscuity, drug-taking and baseball (in 1977 the Yankees won the Series), and '70s nostalgia generally (punk, the blackout, the riots, Studio 54, Plato's Retreat)—remind us that lately Lee has been directing commercials, including one for the U.S. Navy. He even has his own agency, Spike/DDB. The images also remind us that, at least to a significant segment of the population, "art" sells. **NR**



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FROM THE DESK OF RUDY GIULIANI

Dear Mrs. Rodham Clinton:

If you think you can come into MY city and MY state and do some kind of dance on MY chances to become senator, you've got a little surprise waiting.

No, make that a BIG surprise.

No, make that a BUTT-KICKING, HEAD-POUNDING, monster New York-sized surprise. Heading right into that pinched smile that you pull like "I'm such a nice person really, I'm not some kind of crazy screaming lunatic." Because you know what? I know that kind of smile. I know that kind of person. And you know why?

BECAUSE I AM THAT KIND OF PERSON!!!!!!!

Yeah, you've got a surprise coming all right.

First off, let me tell you how great I am. Because I am, you know. I'm the greatest. Crime didn't just come down in this city. I CRUSHED IT. I did, you know. The city is clean! The city is peaceful! I KICKED ITS BUTT!!!!!! I RULE AND YOU KNOW IT!!!!!!!!

You think YOU'RE THE GREATEST????? EXCUSE ME? The greatest WHAT? The greatest FIRST LADY? How hard is that? Just stand there and smile and talk about how great your husband is? (Imagine standing by that kind of man! Imagine the FILTH that went on in that house! Just DIRTY DIRTY DIRTY nasty filth that I for one am going to clean up. First I'm going to kick its butt, THEN I'm going to clean it UP!! Any questions? I didn't think so.)

Hey, news flash: Don't worry so much about a "vast right-wing conspiracy," okay? Worry about the "vast RUDY GIULIANI conspiracy I got RIGHT HERE!"

But you don't seem worried. I see you on the tube, all teeth and confidence. Got it all figured out, huh? You got all your little ducks in a little row, got your nice little house in Westchester, got your whole little life just planned out to the "T."

Well, how about THIS for a surprise: I MAY NOT EVEN RUN!

Oh, man, I would love to see the look on your face when you hear the news that I, the Hon. Rudy Giuliani, am depriving you of the most supreme honor. What gnashing of teeth! Sure, you'll probably win, but the winning will have no joy. You'll be sitting in the well of the Senate and not be able to really enjoy it—for you will know, KNOW, that you didn't really earn it. You'll know that I GAVE it to you by not running.

Of course, that's probably what you're EXPECTING, eh? Oooooh, clever, aren't we? Think you've got the Hon. Rudy Giuliani all psyched out, huh? I've noticed your people following me around. I've heard the clicks on my phone line. I know you've got your pals in the NSA bombarding me with thought-reading rays (they won't work! I've lined my walls with tin foil! Ha!) trying to get inside the Giuliani brain center, trying to figure out how I masterminded the steepest drop in crime, the steepest rise in income, the biggest positive changes that any city (ANY CITY!!!) has ever enjoyed in the history of the earth, from the dawn of time until Armageddon rains down on your unworthy heads . . . wait a sec, where am I?

Oh, yes.

See, I know you THINK you know what I'm going to do next. I know that you THINK I'm going to surprise you by NOT running. Well, I'm going to double surprise you by ACTUALLY running! You won't know what hit you!

Prepare yourself for my majesty! The shining light of my being and the white heat of my achievements will dazzle you into submission! I will receive EVERY SINGLE VOTE in November's election. EVERY SINGLE NEW YORKER will cast his or her ballot for me, the Hon. Rudy Giuliani. Even you.

That's right. EVEN YOU.

For at the end of the journey, even you will say to yourself, "Rudy is truly, truly, the greatest. It was an honor to my butt that he kicked it so freakin' hard."

Until we meet—I remain—

Myself.

P.S.: Memo to self: Do not actually send this letter.

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BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS

After the Final Days

JAY NORDLINGER

Shadow: Five Presidents and the Legacy of Watergate, by Bob Woodward (Simon & Schuster, 592 pp., $27.50)

Bob Woodward by Roman Genn

BOB WOODWARD is the marvel of Washington journalism, an object of intense admiration, loathing, and, above all, envy. To mention his name is to enliven any room. Many of his peers regard him as the best political reporter in the country. A contrary case is difficult to make.

Since achieving fame for his Watergate coverage, Woodward has produced nine books, all but one chronicling in gaudy detail the inner workings of the government. (The other book was a biography of John Belushi, the tragic comedic actor.) The publication of a Woodward book sets off a predictable chain of reactions: The reading public is titillated; the author's sources, embarrassed by the cold reality of print, cry misquotation (or some other misuse); conservatives charge liberal bias; and Woodward's fellow journalists scratch their heads and grumble, "How does he get that stuff?" For all the potshots taken at them, and the mini-scandals surrounding them, the Woodward books always manage, somehow, to hold up.

How does he do it? Woodward works exceptionally hard (with the help, as he graciously acknowledges, of a crack assistant); his reporting is painstaking; and his access to key figures is near-total. (No one can afford to be left out of a Woodward bestseller; every player must provide his own special interpretation.) Woodward's new book, *Shadow*, about the effects of Watergate on the five presidents who have followed Nixon, has been judged less than a blockbuster. Critics say, in the words of one, that it is deficient in its "juicy-tidbits quotient"—which proves how high the expectations for a Woodward tome are. If *Shadow* is lacking in juicy tidbits, then the standard of revelation has become so high that no Washington reporter can hope to succeed.

Woodward's thesis is a prosaic one: that Watergate has changed American politics for all time, and that the post-Nixon presidents have stumbled in adjusting. Prosaic but true—and well demonstrated in this book. Parts of *Shadow* are flat-out riveting; other parts are simply flat: tedious, overfamiliar, unenlightening. More than half the book is devoted to Clinton and his many scandals, and these, somewhat surprisingly, are the weakest sections. This is perhaps because the Clinton years have been amply reported, with platoons of would-be Woodwards—the author's heirs—turning over every rock they can find. It should also be said that Woodward goes rather light on Clinton, telling the story of his administration largely from the Clintonites' point of view. Nonetheless, *Shadow* is a pleasure for anyone taken with modern politics.

Could you bear to read one more word about Watergate—the final days, Nixon, Haig, Ford, and all that? It would seem impossible. But the chapters on Ford's assumption of the presidency and his brief administration are positively gripping. Woodward has interviewed the main characters anew, and he sucks you into the tale in that quasi-novelistic way of his. There is license, yes, but there is resourceful reporting, too. Haig, for one, has obviously given Woodward a lot. The intrigue of early August 1974 is . . . well, intriguing, as Haig flies from Nixon's office to Ford's and back again, whispering about resignation and pardon. Ford makes nervous, late-night phone calls, unsure of what he has committed to, trying to tiptoe through a mine field. During one meeting with Ford, Haig feels certain that Robert Hartmann, a Ford aide, is hidden behind a screen, taking notes.

As for Hartmann, he portrays himself—through his talks with Woodward—as a bold and noble lieutenant. He screams at Ford, admonishes him, practically threatens him, all to stiffen his backbone. This behavior, of course, is scarcely believable; staffers—even the brashest—do not treat presidents and vice presidents that way. But such is the luxury of a Woodward source. Hartmann also reveals that he penned Ford's immortal line, "Our long national nightmare is over." (Ford initially balked at the sentence: "Isn't that a little hard on Dick?") In so doing, Hartmann violates the speechwriter's code, which demands the modesty of silence. (When asked whether he wrote the most famous passage in John Kennedy's inaugural address, Ted Sorensen has been known to reply, "Ask not.")

Woodward offers much that is new on Ford, or at least little known: He was thought to have a drinking problem during his presidency, so much so that a few close aides intervened, urging him to

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A FASCINATING TALE FASCINATINGLY TOLD

—*FIRST THINGS*

Buckley has written a lumbering, themeless pudding of a novel that forces one's eyelids shut like an invisible vise, its characters lying dead on the page.

— Eric Alterman of *The Nation*, writing in *Slate*

An ingeniously symmetrical drama of the origins and psychology of communism and anticommunism.

—Lance Morrow, *Time*

A powerful recreation of one of the most dramatic periods in contemporary political history.

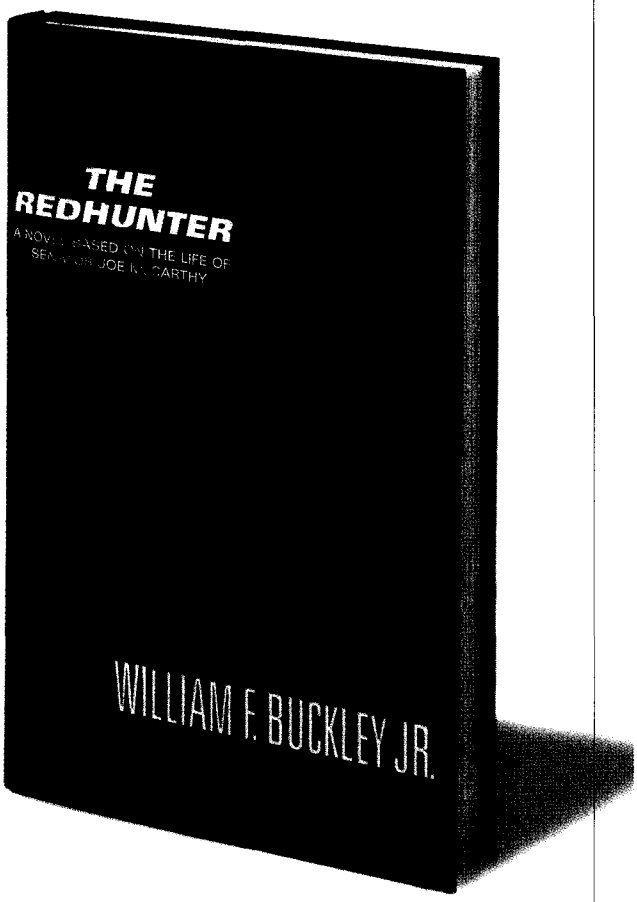
—*Library Journal*

Even liberals who grow faint at the thought of any kind word about McCarthy will enjoy the pacing and suspense of an engrossing story with many twists and turns.

—Robert Novak, *The Weekly Standard*

A remarkable fable of the life and times of Joe McCarthy. The result is a true page-turner. Mr. Buckley has humanized his subject without exonerating him from harsh historical judgments.

—Allen Weinstein, *The Washington Times*



What [*Redhunter*] does try to do and in my view triumphantly succeeds in doing, is to show how the path to hell was paved with good intentions. Simply and beautifully written.

—Peregrine Worsthorne *The* (London) *Spectator*

The livliest piece of historical fiction one is likely to read this year.

—*American Way*

The facts make gripping history; the author's stylistic panache and elegant embellishments only make a good read better.

—Conrad Black, *Chicago Sun-Times*

***THE REDHUNTER • A Novel Based on the Life of Senator Joe McCarthy* by William F. Buckley Jr.**

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forgo his martinis, at least in public (which he did). More amazing, the secretary of defense, James Schlesinger, flagrantly defied two of the president's orders: He refused to send aircraft to Saigon, as that capital was falling (Ford wanted to evacuate as many South Vietnamese as possible), and he failed to carry out punitive military strikes against Cambodia after the *Mayaguez* incident. Ford, in due course, fired him.

■

If Woodward offers no 'juicy tidbits' in this book, then the standard for such tidbits is prohibitively high.

■

Irksomely, Woodward is ungenerous with this ex-president, mishandling even his own interviews with him. In the summer of 1998, Ford took note of the boom economy, exclaiming, "Two hundred sixty million Americans are prosperous and happy." Woodward yearned to remind the dear old man of "millions in poverty, children hungry, and the wrenching despair and horror of life for many." Ford, in Woodward's mind, had been shielded from this unpleasantness in his "world of Republican fundraisers, board meetings, and golf tournaments." "He was so decent," sighs Woodward, patronizingly, "but fully out of touch."

Ford, needless to say, had indulged in a little hyperbole—these *are* extraordinary economic times—and as a product of the Depression, and of a badly broken home, he does not require a lecture on hard knocks.

As to the crucial question of whether there was a deal to pardon Nixon, Woodward is strangely fuzzy. Ford swears that there was no deal, and he does so plausibly. Nothing in Woodward's reporting contradicts this avowal. Yet Woodward leaves the impression that the question—which was partly responsible for Ford's narrow defeat at the hands of Carter in 1976—remains unresolved.

Carter, of course, campaigned as a breath of fresh air following a choking season of Nixonian Republicanism: "I will never lie to you," he pledged, and boasted. But Woodward finds him not entirely up to the purity of his image. In 1977, shortly after Carter had been sworn in, Woodward learned that the CIA had long made payments to King Hussein of Jordan and done certain favors for him, including the supply of a prostitute—Jewish, at that!—in the United States. Carter asked Woodward and his editor at the *Washington Post*, Ben Bradlee, to spike the story or at least delay it; he assured the two men, however, that publication would do nothing to harm national security. The paper soon ran with its scoop, and Carter reacted indignantly, accusing the *Post* of something like betrayal, if not treason. Woodward found it all dismayingly duplicitous.

Carter's major scandals, of course, were those involving two of his fellow Georgians, budget director Bert Lance and chief of staff Hamilton Jordan. Lance was accused of financial impropriety; Jordan was charged with cocaine snorting. None of these allegations held much water—the ones against Jordan were particularly strained—but they scarred Carter, the rectitudinous Sunday-school teacher from Plains, nevertheless.

Reagan's "Watergate"—his biggest scandal, the one that nearly destroyed his presidency—was the Iran-contra affair, and admirers of the Gipper will be pleased to know that he comes off particularly well in *Shadow*. (Mrs. Reagan, though, is another story.) Woodward catches Reagan in only one destruction of a document, and that perfectly legitimate: He put a match to a letter from CIA director Bill Casey recommending that the secretary of state, George Shultz, be canned. Much of the Reagan material is familiar, but Woodward provides a neat narrative of the scandal. In his epilogue, he concludes that, of the post-Watergate chief executives, "Reagan managed his problems best"—which is to say, most honestly.

A curious item here is a disclosure by Howard Baker, the former senator and one of Reagan's many chiefs of staff. It seems that, in July 1973, when Baker was serving on the Watergate Committee, he became the target of frightening dirty tricks: His home was thoroughly, professionally ransacked; he discovered that an executive agency had wiretapped his phone; and, as Woodward writes, "he worried that he actually might be killed. He didn't think he was being paranoid. . . . People had been killed for a lot less." Regrettably, and maddeningly, Woodward says not a word about the many alleged Clinton dirty tricks and the fear that such as Kathleen Willey have felt in the last few years for their own lives: Notorious Clinton dick Terry Lenzner rates no mention at all; Juanita Broaddrick, who contends that Clinton raped her, rates next to none. Would that the great investigative reporter had shone his light on some of these dark corners.

George Bush is a rather underwritten-about president, but his time in office is not unworthy of study. We see him in anguish over his son Neil—who happens to hold no governorship—caught in a savings-and-loan scandal: "They're out to get my boy!" We see him admitting, as his secretary of state seeks a diplomatic solution with Iraq, "We have to have a war"—there was no other way to achieve a peace that would last more than a moment. (Bush's national security advisor, Woodward writes slyly, "was aware that this understanding could never be stated publicly or be permitted to leak out.") And we at last have confirmation of something that many have suspected: that the president was sick during the 1992 campaign, to the detriment of his performance. His doctor confided to press secretary Marlin Fitzwater (who confided to Woodward) that Bush's heart medication affected his "mental acuity" (Woodward's words). Bush would lose ignominiously to Clinton.

The Clinton scandals are appalling affairs, but they are not complicated or hard to understand: They are simple and straightforward. From Whitewater to Travelgate to Filegate to the Lewinsky scandal, the two Clintons have been unrelentingly conniving, mendacious, and immoral. It is hard to believe that these scoundrels could get away with so much for so long—and that they have hundreds of staffers and friends (not to mention millions of voters) willing to help them. Woodward lays out the Clinton dramas in creditable fashion, although most of his sources are the Clintonites themselves, meaning that his book reflects their biases (which coincide, in any case, with his own). Woodward seems to believe that the Clintons are at least as sinned against as

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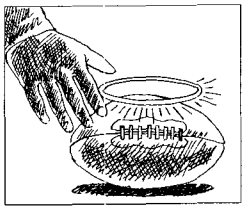
sinning. The alert and informed reader, fortunately, will be able to sort through a carnival of spin and decide for himself who was right, and who wrong.

Where Woodward most disappoints is in his unwillingness to pass judgment—even obliquely—on the Clinton administration, something he is unshy about doing with other administrations. At times he appears even to applaud the Clintonites as they cover up, stonewall, and triumph over the justice system. He writes almost approvingly of their "bottling up" of investigations: What pros they were! Kenneth Starr, he will give no break. For Woodward, he is always "prissy," moralizing, and laughable. Woodward seems almost to mock Starr's very goodness—"I don't want to be disrespectful of the president," the independent counsel said at one point—preferring the slicksters of the administration. And Woodward might have paused to acknowledge that, contrary to what the Clintonites alleged about them, Starr and his men played by the rules and did not leak to the press. The most anti-Clinton, pro-Starr reporters in Washington could not wrest the time of day from that office, as any of them could tell you.

But the anecdotes . . . oh, the anecdotes! *Shadow* is swimming in them. One of the most delicious comes toward the end, and it will delight fans of Jack Nicklaus—and of the integrity of golf—everywhere. Clinton lies about golf, of course, as about everything else—Byron York unforgettably proved this in a brilliant 1996 cover story for *The American Spectator*. One day in 1993, Jerry Ford, Clinton, and Nicklaus played 18 holes together. Clinton later claimed that he had shot an 80 (far too low for him). Writes Woodward, "Ford was shocked. Golf was a matter of honor, even for old duffers, and Clinton had repeatedly taken second shots, called mulligans. Nicklaus leaned over to Ford and whispered in disgust, 'Eighty with fifty floating mulligans.'" When Jack Nicklaus knows you are a liar and a cheat, it hardly matters what the Republican party thinks of you.



Despite its frustrations, *Shadow* is an engrossing work. And no one—no one—but Bob Woodward could have written it. **NR**

Prince or Pollster?

NOEMIE EMERY

Machiavelli on Modern Leadership: Why Machiavelli's Iron Rules Are as Timely and Important Today as Five Centuries Ago, by Michael A. Ledeen
(St. Martin's, 202 pp., $22.95)

The New Prince, by Dick Morris
(Renaissance, 252 pp., $22.95)

NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI, expert, it seems, on all things political, is having a revival of late. He has received the attention of two current courtiers: Michael A. Ledeen, former advisor to President Reagan; and Dick Morris, the political consultant whose most notorious former client is the sitting president. Both have written books that evoke Machiavelli—at least on their covers.

Ledeen's book is actually about Machiavelli, whose precepts he explains to a new generation. Morris's book is all about Bill Clinton, and not incidentally about himself. Ledeen and Machiavelli care about governing, while Morris and Clinton care for campaigns. Ledeen cares about genuine strength, as measured in morale and in armies. Morris cares for its appearance, as measured in polls. To Ledeen, and to Machiavelli, the role of the leader is to secure the long-term interests of the state and its people.

Nothing shows better that Ledeen and Morris are living in two different universes than their different conceptions of strength. To Machiavelli—and to Ledeen—strength is the true bedrock of leadership, the bringer of order and liberty, peace and stability. Strength can be badly misused by evil individuals; but the best intentions in the world will be meaningless in its absence: a simple idea readily grasped by Washington, Hamilton, Lincoln, both of the Roosevelts, Truman, Eisenhower, John Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and Ronald Reagan.

In Clinton's view, fear and power are to be used for his own survival, not that of his country; and to Morris, strength means high polls. When Morris quotes Machiavelli on the subject of fear, the results are highly questionable: "How is a candidate to get the blessing of his party's leaders? Remember Machiavelli's dictum that it is better to be feared than loved. Rather than focus on being attractive to the party's leaders, a candidate must be attractive to the voters . . . Those with good poll numbers prove irresistible." "Irresistible" to whom, and where? Bosnian bullies and Chinese Communists certainly aren't moved by these numbers.

Then there is the question of evil and good. In the surreal universe of high-pressure diplomacy, evil deeds such as lying and killing can lead in the end to beneficent outcomes, while deeds that on the face of things appear to be moral can lead to more dire events. "In order to achieve the most noble accomplishments, the leader may have to 'enter into evil,'" Ledeen maintains, quoting Machiavelli. "It is wrong to behave ethically if in doing so you open the door to enemies who will destroy all possibility of an ethical world." Thus Ledeen cites the decision of Jimmy Carter to rule out assassination as a method of dealing with terrorists, because Carter thought singling out one man for death was immoral. But then, the only tactic left becomes bombing raids, which kill many innocent people. Another example would have been a decision to go to war for the Rhineland in 1936, which would surely have caused bloodshed but prevented the horror that came on four years later, claiming some 40 million lives. And then there is Truman's decision to use the atomic bomb against Japan.

To Ledeen's Machiavelli, the administration given to us by Clinton is the very model of the sickened state.

To Clinton and Morris, at least from

Ms. Emery is writing a book about American political dynasties.

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the evidence of *The New Prince*, morals are relative, and war is simply politics by other means. Thus one can bomb to try to distract from a personal scandal; start a half-war in an effort to postpone an impeachment; and go to war because it may look, or feel, good. To Ledeen, one must strike an enemy with all the force needed to obtain the objective; to do less than that is immoral.

In the *Washington Post* of May 27, Morris outlined a Bosnia strategy, based on poll data. Instead of bombing from 20,000 feet or sending in ground troops, he suggested sending in helicopters at 400 feet, a strategy he thought more dangerous but also more effective. "The President made the sine qua non of American involvement that there would be no casualties. But that's misguided. Polls and past experience suggest the American people would accept 25 to 50 deaths." And what are these "acceptable deaths"? Apparently the number the public is ready to swallow without starting to turn on the president. Even the master might retch.

Nothing divides the Machiavelli of Ledeen's understanding from the Machiavelli of Morris's as much as corruption in office itself. To Ledeen and his mentor, it is an insidious poison, capable of dissolving the government enterprise. "Free enterprises . . . must relentlessly fight corruption," Ledeen tells us, "and when improper actions are found, the malefactors must be quickly demoted or dismissed." Morris, on the other hand, cares little if his Prince is waist-high in perdition. After all, "Once a politician is indicted . . . voters turn away from him, but not before." (It's nice to know that people may still have some standards.)

To the Machiavelli envisioned by Ledeen, the administration given to us by Clinton is the very model of the sickened state. To this Machiavelli, foreign and defense policies are of the highest importance, keys to the safety of the national enterprise. To Clinton, and apparently to Morris, they are mere extensions of domestic politics, and serve the same purpose: to rev up one's ratings in the polls. Nations have been formed, led, and saved by men of huge egos, who contrived to subsume them in the national interest: men like Washington, Lincoln, and the several presidents who won the Cold War. Clinton, on the other hand, has no adequate sense of a national interest and so thinks predominantly of his own. The only end to which he has ever been apt to use fear and power has been his political survival, and then so that he may go on to seek more approval. He is the epitome of the Ledeen-Machiavellian idea of the impotent leader, who wants to be loved, not feared.

Ledeen contrasts the leaders of the 1980s—Reagan, Thatcher, Pope John Paul II—who wanted respect, and made history, with their successors of the current decade—John Major, George Bush, and Newt Gingrich among them—who wanted to be loved, even by their opponents, and failed. There are signs now that Clinton, though elected twice, will soon be among them. Since winter, much of the bloom has gone off the sad rose of Bill Clinton: His personal ratings, always low, have not risen; his job-approval ratings are rapidly sinking; people are tired of him and his problems; only 30 percent would vote for him again (the Dow notwithstanding). He drags down Al Gore, whose numbers are dismal; he may also now drag down his wife. Machiavelli would not be surprised. Start out wanting to be feared, by all the right people, and you may well end up being loved in the bargain. Start out seeking love, even from enemies, and you wind up with nothing at all. **NR**

Oh, to Be English!

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Anglomania: A European Love Affair, by Ian Buruma (Random House, 304 pp., $25.95)

"We Englishmen are Very Proud of our Constitution, Sir," announced Mr. Podsnap in a hortatory moment. "It was Bestowed Upon Us By Providence. No Other Country is so Favoured as This Country." Perhaps sensing the capitalization that Dickens was placing in the mouth of his character (and perhaps bridling at it), Podsnap's Continental victim inquired:

> "And other countries? They do how?"
> "They do, Sir," returned Mr. Podsnap, gravely shaking his head; "they do—I am sorry to be obliged to say it—*as* they do."

The joke, at first blush, appears to be on poor old Podsnap, who is so wedded to John Bull and his tight little island that he is unaware that the English don't really even have a proper constitution, in the written and lapidary sense of the term. Wogs, for him, begin at Calais. But here's an even better joke, with the excellent Ian Buruma to relate it. Voltaire, Herzen, Mazzini, Marx, Herzl, Hayek—all of them in varying degrees came to respect, if not indeed to prefer, an insular society that had a reliable tradition of liberty even if it lacked such crucial and—I am sorry to be obliged to say it—Continental preconditions as an interest in theory or an attachment to grand ideas. English Marxists like myself used to break our rotting fangs on this paradox or contradiction, which was intuitively if not explicitly understood by the old émigré German-Jewish polymath who developed such agonizing yet historic hemorrhoids in the British Museum.

Nikos Kazantzakis's travel book *England*, written in 1939, is not mentioned by Buruma but came up with the three essential beliefs that constitute the "Anglomania" on which he concentrates. These are the beliefs in the concept of liberty, the idea of the gentleman, and the numinous influence of Shakespeare. Not every Anglophile—and please note the distinction—was magnetized by all three. The Anglo*phile* Voltaire, for example, despised Shakespeare almost as much as Tolstoy later did. Marx could quote Shakespeare by the hour but found the "gentleman" notion a risible one. Theodor Herzl mistook the cad Disraeli for a gentleman but hoped that the

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youth of a future Jewish Palestine would be taught to play cricket.

It's probably essential to come at this subject from a slight angle, and Ian Buruma possesses a perspective that fits him very well for the task in hand. He is Dutch on one side of his family, German-Jewish on the other, and has since his teens made England a base from which to compose well-wrought analyses of China and Japan. Polymathic and polyglot, he might be termed a rooted cosmopolitan. His

■

Ian Buruma reminds us that the old country was never so true to itself as when it was open to others.

■

Dutch family looked on England as the brave nation that brought deliverance from Nazism; his Jewish family helped make it a safe haven for a later generation of refugees; both wings had a fondness for English style and manners that at times verged on affectation. Thus, while Buruma appreciates the liberty and hospitality of "Britain" in a way that natives of the rain-sodden archipelago often do not, he is alert to the mere aping of Englishness, and this, I take it, constitutes his distinction between Anglophilia and Anglomania. He shrewdly points out that even ur-Englishmen can degenerate into foppish parodies of themselves: Buruma amusingly describes working at the tweed-infested offices of *The* (London) *Spectator*. Also instructive is his portrait of the trying-too-hard F. A. von Hayek, who became more of a caricature gent than even T. S. Eliot.

The founding text of the Continental fascination with England is Voltaire's *Letters Concerning the English Nation*, in which he sets out some themes—religious toleration, social and commercial mobility, the ease and spaciousness of English gardens—that recur in the observations of Frenchmen as various as Taine, Tocqueville, and Baron de Coubertin. (They also find their counterpoint in the work of Anglophobes, like the Catholic fascist Charles Maurras, who regarded the English as little better than mongrelized and shop-keeping Jews.) Giuseppe Mazzini, who based himself in London while planning feverishly for the unification of Italy, was converted to Anglomania. At the instigation of Metternich and the Pope—the same alliance later delineated by Marx and Engels in their *Manifesto*—he was subjected to British police harassment and mail-tampering. At once, Dickens and Carlyle and Macaulay leapt to his aid; both houses of Parliament held spirited sessions, the vile foreign practice of snooping was denounced, and Mazzini's portrait was sold in the streets as that of a popular hero. On his brief but decisive return to Rome in 1849, this hot-blooded Mediterranean democrat wrote: "I think very often under these radiant skies of the London fogs and always regretfully. Individually speaking, I was evidently intended for an Englishman."

For my money, Buruma's most enthralling chapter concerns the Germanization of Shakespeare by the Anglomaniacs Goethe and Schlegel. Determined as they were to rescue the Bard from the vulgar pleasures of the theater-loving mass, and to impose upon him a classical formality and discipline, these earnest and principled Teutons interpreted the plays as examples of nation-building and idealism. This culminated in a macabre event in Weimar in April of 1940, when Hitler called a meeting of the Nazi elite to celebrate Shakespeare's birthday as the anniversary of a great Nordic tragedian. This seems to be neither Anglophilia nor Anglomania; more a proof that "high culture" is no axiomatic insurance against barbarism. On the other hand, one might argue that Shakespeare survived this profanation, as he survives every other assault, and that even the rankest hypocrisy involves the payment of some dues to virtue. Viewed in this light, the Weimar travesty can make one proud to be British.

Buruma does not, however, encourage the sort of sentimentality of which such pride might be an example. Having once himself been smitten with the cult of the English public school, he writes unsparingly of Baron de Coubertin and his uncritical adoration of Dr. Arnold and *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. The Olympic ideal, of fresh air and strength through joy and the cultivation of the gentleman, seems to him foolish at one end (sporting competitions do nothing to increase international comity and can accomplish the reverse) and sinister at another (Coubertin's quavering voice was played over the loudspeakers at the Munich Olympics in 1936). Dr Arnold himself delivered a near-faultless Podsnapism several decades earlier, when he opined that "the English gentleman is a finer specimen of human nature than any other country, I believe, could furnish." He had done little more than take a vacation in France when he made that penetrating observation.

This book could hardly be any better. It is learned and witty and serious all at the same time, and I say this with all the authority of a personal friend of the author's. It is also most admirably timed. The old "Britain" of Laurence Olivier's *Henry V* is yielding from within, to Irish and Welsh and Scots autonomy and to constitutional and republican pressure from English radicals. It is also being eroded from without, by a set of European supranational institutions. Meanwhile, its literature and language are being refreshed and remade by a generation of young novelists many of whom were born as colonial subjects with skins dark in hue. As I write, debate persists on a meanspirited and restrictive asylum law, originally promulgated by a Jewish Tory whose parents first saw the white cliffs of Dover as refugees from persecution. America has replaced England as the Mecca of the dissident and the deported. Anglophilia now survives principally as a marketing device for PBS—"Petroleum's British Subsidiary," as Tom Wolfe once called it—and as a certain Hollywood patina. Buruma reminds us that the old country was never so true to itself as when it was open to others. **NR**

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Professional American

JAMES GARDNER

Timbuktu, by Paul Auster (Holt, 181 pp., $22)

IT may come as a surprise to many readers that, when Europeans think of the typical American author, they immediately think of Paul Auster. Surely Auster has won a respectable amount of praise in this country. But that is nothing compared with the renown he enjoys abroad. From Amsterdam and Paris all the way to Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro you see young people toting paperback copies of his *New York Trilogy*. In France especially, where he has lived and been a translator, he has acquired that special status reserved only for the likes of Jerry Lewis, Mickey Rourke, and Edgar Allen Poe.

And though we Americans are apt to find something distinctly European in his rarefied novels and in such art-house films as *Smoke*, which he wrote, to the Europeans themselves these works seem quintessentially American. This is because, perhaps unconsciously, Auster has become the literary equivalent of that strange animal, the professional American. The reader is probably more familiar with the professional Brit and the professional Frenchman who choose to live among us, knowing that a certain kind of American will be charmed by the way they studiously incarnate their national characters: the Brit who uses Latin phrases and complains about the heat, the Frenchman who turns up his nose at the local eateries and knows how to treat the ladies. Well, there is an American version of this for European consumption, and you will find him at a table in the Café Flore, edifying the locals with references to baseball and jazz while complaining that, in all of Paris, he cannot find a decent bagel.

In his latest novel, Auster writes what is at first glance a very American book. It has to do with a dog, Mr. Bones, and his master, Willy G. Christmas, born William Gurevitch, a beat poet, barfly, drug addict, and all-around derelict who suffers from brief, psychotic episodes. "He grew up American," Auster writes, "a Brooklyn boy who played stickball in the streets, read *Mad* magazine under the covers at night, and listened to Buddy Holly and the Big Bopper." It would be hard to put one's finger on the precise element that does not ring true, that quality of writing about the American scene from the outside looking in. Rather it is a cumulative effect of many similar passages that leaves this powerful impression. It is telling that at one point Willy is called "the Second Coming of François Villon," 15th-century grand-daddy of all the street bards and *poètes maudits* of more recent times.

The professional American sits in the Café Flore, edifying the locals with references to baseball and jazz.

The French have a phrase, *nostalgie de la boue*, that describes perfectly the charm that Auster clearly perceives in Willy's downtrodden existence. At one point Auster gives what could almost be a dictionary definition of this phrase: "The more wretched your life was, the closer you were to the truth, to the gritty nub of existence." In the context of the paragraph in which this occurs, Auster is being ironic. And yet, in the larger context of the book, this could serve as a mission statement. Willy is clearly a rough-cut diamond, or some cliché to that effect, who curses, is rarely sober, and turns out to be a saint. This sanctification occurs during one psychotic episode (which, Auster seems typically to suggest, has some higher truth to it), Santa Claus visits him and inspires him "to embody the spirit of Christmas every day of the year." Hence his name.

Alas, Willy is not long for this world. When he dies, roughly halfway through the novel, the real protagonist of the work, Mr. Bones, a cuddly mongrel, implicitly carries on in his spirit. Although Mr. Bones cannot speak English, he understands it so well that he sees through the hypocrisy of everyone around him. After his master's death Mr. Bones goes in search of a new home. He has a series of misadventures, most perilous of which is his falling in with a thoroughly bourgeois family in Baltimore. All we need to hear is that Dick, the family's he-man breadwinner, "was starting to earn good money . . . they were pretty well off now," to know there is trouble ahead. Will Mr. Bones sell out? The answer, of course, is never really in doubt. The novel ends with him resorting to a desperate measure to save his authenticity and be reunited with Willie in Timbuktu, their name for Paradise.

Clearly there is more than a little humbug to this book. It is also true that the telling of a human story through the eyes of a pet is not entirely new: One would not be surprised if Auster were familiar with, for example, Christa Wolf's *Neue Lebensansichten eines Katers*. Finally it is true that this novel, like many of Auster's other works, begins with a highly promising and inventive premise that the author does not have the imaginative stamina to exploit fully. But even with all of these reservations, it would be unfair to deny that Auster handles the language better than almost anyone else writing today, and that at least the first chapter of *Timbuktu* is one of the finest and most polished to have appeared in any recent novel. **NR**

■ THEATER ■

LaBute & the Beasts

DAVID KLINGHOFFER

IT'S possible I'm making too much of the fact that, before the show started at the Fairbanks Theater on 42nd Street, there were two girls in the men's restroom, not resting at all but giggling a little and scoping out the scenery. I turned around in annoyed surprise and grumbled something like, "You know, this is the men's bathroom. Women are supposed to be in the women's bathroom." They looked at me like I'd pulled a Bible out and started quoting from it—

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in other words, like I was crazy. Gesturing to the occupied stall, one said: "But there's a long line for the women's bathroom, and we're waiting for him to come out." Coed college bathrooms have been ruminated about before; and my date, a Smith graduate, said that Amherst men were always traipsing through the bathrooms at that all-women's college. But women venturing into a men's room with men in it—that was a new one to me.

Though LaBute believes he is preaching old-fashioned Mormon values, that's not how his audiences understand him.

I mention this only because it sheds a bit of light on the psychology of those artsy New Yorkers who go to see plays like *Bash*, by playwright-movie director-movie scriptwriter Neil LaBute, a smash already sold out for its five-week stint off Broadway. It's the sort of play that supposedly makes "an audience think against its own received opinions." Actually that line—which you've read a million times in reference to artsy, lefty art but which is rarely true—was written by a critic in *The New Yorker* who was praising a previous film by LaBute. But it crystallizes the view expressed by numerous critics about all of LaBute's work.

First came his low-budget, Sundance-decorated debut, *In the Company of Men* (1997), a truly unnerving 90 minutes in which two thirtysomething businessmen set out to seduce then dump a pretty but romantically inexperienced deaf girl. The key line, uttered to chilling effect by Aaron Eckhart as the mastermind of the scheme, is, "Let's do it. Let's hurt someone!" A year later LaBute's more amply budgeted follow-up, *Your Friends and Neighbors*, cast its circle of darkness a little wider. The protagonists here are three men, three women. LaBute's themes are insincerity—the lies we tell even in the most commonplace conversations, as in, "We should get together more often than this!"—and the casual way men and women devastate one another, then evade moral responsibility by chalking up their sins to "fate" or "chance." Men especially.

Strange to say, LaBute is an art-house favorite who believes in sin. That is, he believes in the concept of sin, not, as you might expect, in sinning whenever possible on principle. A practicing Mormon, he describes his own morals as "unforgiving and Old Testament." (In fact, there's nothing unforgiving about the Israelite God, but never mind.) Of the purpose of the stories he tells in film and on stage, he says it is to provide "that very simple Berenstein Bear example that this is what you must not do." (The Berenstein Bears are an ursine family who star in a series of children's cartoon books.)

What in all this might appeal to art-house types like the girls in that men's room is an interesting question. A play in three parts, *Bash* lacks the concentrated, knock-you-off-your-feet energy of *In the Company of Men*, but is memorable all the same. The first part, a monologue by Calista Flockhart of the TV series *Ally McBeal*, very believably tells of a young girl romanced and impregnated by her junior-high lit teacher. She gives birth, is instantly abandoned by the teacher, and takes a sudden, savage revenge on her own child. In the second, a Mormon businessman—Ron Eldard, who does an uncanny imitation of a Salt Lake City twang—attempts to justify his own descent to child-murder. With his corporate job just having been downsized, a new baby in the family would make feeding the rest of the brood that much harder. After the intermission, Miss Flockhart and Paul Rudd enact a cheerful young Mormon couple's weekend jaunt to Manhattan, which ends in boyish, dopey John's bashing a homosexual to death in nighttime Central Park. "I know Scripture," he explains. By the end, the formerly amiable fellow has been transformed, now lit from below to give the appearance of a mop-topped demon.

LaBute creates brilliantly vivid characters here, and he writes monologues and dialogues almost to perfection. Nor is the Berenstein Bears effect to be discounted. For a viewer with a moral framework already in place, LaBute's depiction of universal beastliness has a scared-straight power to it, issuing a terrible warning against everyday selfishness. That's what the playwright intends. But is it what the playgoers are going for?

More likely what they're after is the opportunity to *feel* something, like the businessmen in *In the Company of Men* whose goal isn't merely to hurt someone but to *feel* what that feels like. LaBute churns you up inside. But there's another attraction. The crowd of New Yorkers at the Fairbanks Theater is of the variety that understands gay-bashing as the pinnacle of evil. This tells you something about their somewhat jumbled notion of moral responsibility, where the saintliest, most doted-upon figure is the gay man vulnerably alone in Central Park. This outlook is about as far away from that of LaBute's Mormon co-religionists as you can imagine. For these moral liberals, no delight can compare with seeing the mask wrenched from the face of the Mormons, revealing the satanic reality beneath. Ben Brantley's gushing review of *Bash* in the *New York Times* was characteristic, leaning heavily on the notion of "that sheen of idealized, corn-country wholesomeness," "the equivalent of a glass of milk," "clean-cut," "sunny," which "goes down bland and easy," but beware "the acid in the blandest substances," "the darkness within," "evil wear[ing] an all-American glow."

Some of these New Yorkers really do dislike Americans. The irony of LaBute's success lies precisely in that distaste. Though he believes he is preaching old-fashioned, all-American Mormon values, that's not at all how his admiring audiences understand him.

But then you wonder if portraying all this darkness—the lying, the insincerity, the rampant physical and emotional violence—is as ideologically traditional as LaBute thinks. And the irony starts to fade. "Probing moralism," Ben Brantley says of *Bash*. There is moralism, and then there is cynicism. "In my haste, I said all men are deceivers," King David wrote in a psalm (116:11). But David relinquished that view—the quintessence of cynicism, an attitude he was bound to

Mr. Klinghoffer, an NR senior editor, is author of *The Lord Will Gather Me In: My Journey to Jewish Orthodoxy.*

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reject because, morally speaking, cynicism lets us off the hook. If all men really are deceivers, then I'm hardly to be blamed for being a deceiver myself. If all of us really were as beastly as the characters in Neil LaBute's movies and plays, then the cosmopolitan New Yorkers who disdain moral responsibility would be—well, they'd be right. Was this audience really forced "to think against its own received opinions"? On the contrary. Without knowing it, LaBute may have provided the ultimate artistic justification for casting off the traditional demands of a moral outlook.

These demands might be said to include, oh, not using toilet facilities assigned to the opposite sex. Now you begin to see what those girls were doing in the men's room. **NR**

■ **FILM** ■

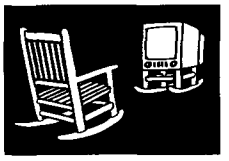
Boy Learns, Girl Runs

JOHN SIMON

MORE than ever, in movies, small is beautiful. The blockbusters keep spewing out their predictable fare of frenzied action, unbounded violence, and heaving nudity; their success is not to their credit, merely to the debit of dumbed-down audiences. That is where charming small films come in as rescuers: *Enchanted April* or *Tea With Mussolini*, *A Walk on the Moon* or the much tougher *Dreamlife of Angels*. Now comes ***My Life So Far***, a notch or two below, but still delightful and heartily recommendable.

The film is based on a section of *Son of Adam*, the childhood memoir of Sir Denis Forman, television executive and Royal Opera bigwig. The very setting is a winner: the home of the Pettigrews, Kiloran House, at Loch Fyne in the Scottish Highlands. The house is a cheeky blend of medieval castle and Edwardian mansion; its attics harbor legendary demons; in the woods bordering its lawns, the Hairy Man is roaming. Missing only is a monster in the loch.

The story is chiefly that of ten-year-old Fraser and his eccentric inventor father, Edward, a veritable volcano of mostly useless inventions. But there are also Gamma (Granny) Macintosh, the matriarch and sometimes-benevolent tyrant; her ruthlessly acquisitive son, Uncle Morris to the six Pettigrew kids; and Moira, Edward's loving wife and a devoted mother.



My Life So Far begins further back, though—when Fraser, still a toddler, escapes to the roof, crawling about blithely in mortal danger as the family rushes around below trying frantically to retrieve him. The scene establishes the movie's ability to sound two notes simultaneously: comedy and suspense. When Edward climbs onto the roof, he communicates with the preverbal Fraser in their cherished dog language: A droll barking duet helps return the tot to the fold.

Edward revels in splendid contradictions. He is stern and teddy-bearish, puritanical and permissive, dedicated and outrageous by turns. He lives amid a congeries of abandoned inventions, some finished, some not—everything from a four-foot metal foghorn for communicating with the kitchen downstairs to a disastrous rubber wading outfit and a set of outlandish pyramidal speakers to enhance the gramophone. This last will be a battleground between him, a Beethoven fanatic, and Fraser, a zealous convert to jazz, which his father abominates.

Uncle Morris Macintosh can't wait to snatch Kiloran away from Edward Pettigrew, whose impracticality further

■

Child actors don't come more poised and affecting than 11-year-old Robbie Norman.

■

emboldens his brother-in-law's greed. Besides, Morris has acquired a delicious French fiancée, Héloïse, for whom he considers the house just the right lagniappe. The young woman is a half-free spirit, flirting innocently with Edward and Fraser, both smitten, and Edward, at any rate, determines to do something about it. Occasionally dropping out of the sky is a happy-go-lucky French pilot, Gabriel Chenoux, who starts a dalliance with 16-year-old Elspeth, the eldest of the Pettigrew brood.

Two more remote presences also matter. Grandfather Macintosh, though dead, lives on in the illustrated sex books that, albeit hidden, fall into Fraser's hands; devoured but imperfectly digested, they will push the youngster into a number of resounding *faux pas*. And lurking in the not-too-distant future is World War II, in which Edward's most far-fetched brainstorm, a sphagnum-moss factory, will prove highly useful for its product's antibacterial and absorbent properties.

Add to the comic potential of all this some more serious elements: Moira's discovery of her husband's infatuation with Héloïse, leading to an ill-considered bet during a picturesque curling tournament on the frozen loch, where Gamma also comes to grief.

Simon Donald's screenplay hurtles along merrily and sometimes poignantly, but not without some bumps. The Gabriel–Elspeth relationship is stinted on; we do not get a sense of what draws the lively Héloïse to the unpleasant

(Continued on p. 61)

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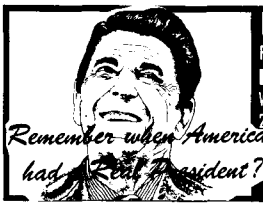

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SIMON

(Continued from p. 59)

Morris; a vast array of minor characters parades on and off before we can get a proper fix on any of them. And there is one major casting error: As Héloïse, the likable Irène Jacob is not, despite her talent, the head-turner and heart-scorcher she is meant to be.

Otherwise, Hugh Hudson, best remembered for *Chariots of Fire*, has directed with delicacy and sparkle. His imaginative French cinematographer, Bernard Lutic, has done wonders for the Scottish scenery, or is it vice versa? Lutic is no slouch indoors either, where he exploits the contrast between bright frilly gowns and brooding walls and furniture. The dialogue veering from madcap to grave contributes its own chiaroscuro, although I could have done with a little less Beethoven on the soundtrack and more of Howard Blake's original music, even if Blake is not one of the three B's.

Colin Firth is first-rate as the loopy Edward, dexterously juggling the character's contradictions; Rosemary Harris admirably blends steeliness and humanity as Gamma; Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, as Moira, may be imperfectly Scottish, but is perfectly lovable. Malcolm McDowell is a wryly amusing Morris, and child actors don't come more poised and affecting, without lapsing into cuteness, than the 11-year-old tyro Robbie Norman as Fraser.

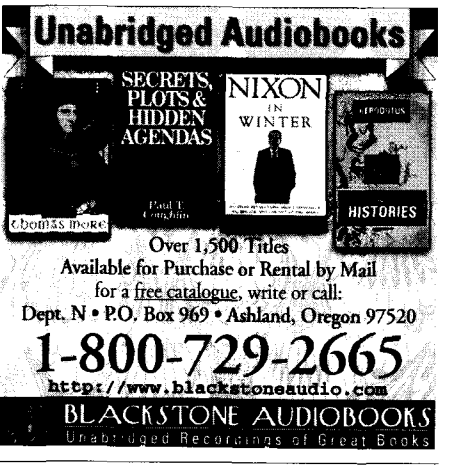
■ It has been some time since a film from Germany has made waves among audiences and reviewers; Tom Tykwer's ***Run Lola Run*** has produced big billows. Yet, to my mind, the writer-director Tykwer suffers from an excess of originality and not much to vent it on.

Manni, a puny courier for a big gangster, loses a plastic bag with 100,000 marks in drug money on the Berlin subway, and a bum makes off with it. From a phone booth at the other end of town, he rings his girlfriend, Lola, in a panic: She must bring him a replacement sum to this out-of-the-way meeting place in 20 minutes, or else his life is forfeit.

From here on, everything and nothing happens. The same story is told several times, with some but not all particulars changed, and with a different ending. Lola keeps running most of the time, but Lola keeps running most of the time, but the movie will turn her at times (literally) into a cartoon; at others, she bumps into or doesn't bump into certain passersby, is delayed buying cigarettes or not, has to dodge this or that bit of traffic—or not. The sequences involving Lola and Manni are shot on 35 mm film; minor characters appear on synthetic-looking video. But when Lola runs through a video image, it too becomes film. Clocks observe the 20-minute time frame, but lengthy scenes, such as Lola trying to get money from her father's bank, clearly flout it. The father, by the way, is played by an actor scarcely older than Lola.

The music, by Tykwer and two others, is a crazy quilt, often defying the action. The camera can be as frisky as a puppy or as dogged as a Doberman unleashed. A typical statement from the director goes: "One really crazy aspect was all the clocks that keep coming into shots everywhere—we spent hours discussing whether it was seven minutes or six in some scenes." If you have difficulty following that statement, try following a film in which there is no boundary between fantasy and reality, most likely because the latter doesn't exist. Why, even the concluding crawl is contrary, with words scrolled in the opposite direction from the one we are used to.

There is not much room for acting amid all this trickery, and I wouldn't blame the actors for not creating characters. The worst thing about all this often ingenious technique is that it dies with this movie: It cannot be applied to another, better film than *Run Lola Run* and retain its freshness. And, by the way, how could a courier, however dumb, leave a bag of money, on which his life depends, in the subway? **NR**



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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Good Morning, Boris

NEW YORK, JUNE 15

"All set, Mr. President: President Yeltsin is on the line."

"Is Sandy Berger standing by on the Situation Room line?"

"Yes, sir, and your video screen is connected."

"*Good* morning, Boris. I trust you are well?"

"Is there any reason why I should not be well, Beel?"

"No, no reason at all, but we have been wondering about your communication with General Slopov—"

[on screen] "IT'S SHLEPOV."

"—with General Shlepov. Perhaps he has misunderstood you. The British are trying to get down to the airfield at Pristina and—"

"The British? They have been the most mad-dog warmongers. I am surprised they have not begun to fire artillery at our Russian division—"

"IT'S ONLY 200 SOLDIERS. BATTALION NOT DIVISION."

"Boris, I'm glad we aren't talking about a Russian *division*. We are talking about a mere *battalion*, and since the cease-fire arrangements made it very clear that NATO was in charge of guaranteeing the military terms of the agreement—"

"CHERNOMYRDIN AGREED."

"—as your distinguished envoy agreed, Boris."

"Viktor. Ah, Viktor. I think I will fire Viktor. He does not, I think, have a truly Russian soul. The division that went into Kosovo, they have the Russian soul. They will not take orders from your imperialistic NATO, let's understand that, Beel."

"But Boris, the military operation to stop ethnic cleansing was a NATO operation. You would not expect that NATO would wish a division in Kosovo, that would be very—"

"DIVISIVE."

"—divisive."

"You do not want divisiveness, Beel. *We* do not want divisiveness. But what do we have? We have *all* of Western Europe pushing up against Soviet—against Russian—borders in threatening ways, now including Poland. Would you like me to have a NATO division superintending traffic in Moscow? Is *that* what you would like, Beel?"

"Of *course* not. I mean, Boris, we have absolutely *no* imperial ambitions. We do not want one half-acre of territory that you control. We are struggling to bring and maintain peace—"

"MENTION G-8."

"—in all of Europe. And when the G-8 meet at the end of the week I think you will—as our guest, Boris, our honored guest—you will reconfirm the impression you certainly got at our last meeting in Tokyo, that we not only wish you well, Boris, we are anxious to try to help in any way—"

"Help Russia? Russia does not need help. Russia is entitled to a degree of economic cooperation. Russia is recuperating from many endeavors. Where would Western Europe be if Russia had not contributed 15 million men to the defeat of Nazi Germany? I *myself* as a boy saw the Germans—"

"CAREFUL. AVOID 1945–1989."

"—march through the town of Ekaterinaburg. They burned everything except the Czar's last home. I had to do that for them. Hah!!! That's a good one, 'I had to do that for them—'"

"We understand all of the difficulties Russia is having and want to help. But, Boris, we can't just have the British general who is *in charge* of the NATO military in Kosovo, we can't just have him standing outside like a schoolboy, waiting for your soldiers to permit his helicopter and the command helicopters to set down. You *must* understand that that is simply unbearable for us—"

"Why do you not complain to the United Nations?"

"The *United Nations*! Boris, our operation has *nothing to do* with the United Nations."

"Russia is committed to cooperation with the United Nations. Are you asking us to scorn the United Nations? Are we not pledged to work with the United Nations?"

"Boris, of course we have to cooperate with the U.N. But the U.N. was not involved in our operation to stop the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and what we are doing right now is implementing the cease-fire accords which Chernomyrdin *approved*—"

"I told you. I think I will fire Viktor."

"PROMISE YOU WON'T SNITCH."

"Well, of course, Boris, that is your business. I would never reveal that you are impatient with your personal envoy. I would not even let my own White House people know that. But we do have his signature as *your* representative—"

"I'll think about it . . . "

"SIGN OFF. SAY TUESDAY YOU'LL CALL."

"Thank you, Boris. I will call back on Tuesday. And please, instruct your . . . division to please allow the British general to land."

"Ho ho. His helicopter is running out of gas? Ho ho. Good-bye, Beel."

"Good-bye, Boris."

Creeping Unction

NEW YORK, JUNE 8

There is something a little undignified about the galloping Republican beatification of Gov. George Bush. This phenomenon is interesting on several levels. We have been through a presidential session in which the word went out, however obliquely, that a United States president is not to be touched once he is in office. On another level, we seem to be looking for a presidential successor in the tradition of a Dalai Lama—who at age two is identified by the wise men as the divine successor. It happens that I have known, however slightly, George W., have known well and have deep regard for President Bush, and evaluate the governor's policies as somewhere between commendable and inscrutable. But every time another governor sends forth his benediction to Mr. Bush's presidential campaign, one winces at the creeping unction of it all. Gov. Pataki all but announced his thralldom to George W. in Radio City Music Hall with the cast of *The Lion King*.

Things shouldn't go that way in a healthy democratic society. The Clinton experience suggests that once we get a president, he is inviolate. If George W. didn't have a racy past as an undergraduate and feels he lost out on something, he can certainly look forward to catching up while president, should the impulses reactivate.

The presidential primary season is supposed to cope with these questions, subjecting candidates to more or less equal

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treatment. They are supposed to meet head to head in primary campaigns, though they do this less and less. And they must spend many days and nights in the deserts of primary states, in particular Iowa and New Hampshire. But the way it is now building for Gov. Bush, the primary experience is made to look like nothing more than a diplomatic sop to political tradition, on the order of Henry James submitting to a literacy test before being allowed to vote in Massachusetts.

Now what the advisors to George W. urge on him is one thing. It is quite another how that advice is received by the lusty community that wants to participate wholesomely and vigorously in the selection of a presidential candidate. At this moment on the political scene, conservative-minded Americans should feel a special prod to squeeze idealistic thoughts out of the silent womb of presidential candidates. The search is not only for specific programs but for the qualities of leadership. One campaign strategy is to merge yourself into the backdrop of the political scene so that you are thought entirely unexceptionable; another way is to assert yourself as precisely that, a vigorous exception to the acquiescent scene.

Consider now what might be called a negative platform, focused on presidential power. It would be heartening to hear from George W. that he scorns the developing practice of presidents engaging in major military engagements without consultation with Congress. The exceptions to any reform on that score are obvious: The exercise of the duties of the commander in chief is needed in urgent situations. But the Kosovo adventure was anything but urgent. Put another way, it may have seemed urgent in 1993 when Milosevic might have been stopped. It was less than urgent in 1999 when what we succeeded in doing was to hasten the genocidal operations of Milosevic.

The clearly specified authority of the president to wage war only when authorized to do so by Congress has become so sleepy as to be an all but forgotten article in the Constitution. We have had over a hundred military sorties since the Constitution was ratified, but these have been excused on expedient grounds and weren't major exercises of power. The great modern exceptions have been Korea (no declaration of war), the Gulf War (congressional consultation only), and now Kosovo. A presidential contender might declare himself recommitted to formal constitutional practices.

So might he take a stand on the general subject of the usurpation of powers by the courts. He might take a single issue, let us say the dumbfounding position that religion clauses designed to keep separate the church and the state legitimately forbid common prayer in public schools. Now *that* would cause the wildlife in Austin to stir, as though a huge injection of life-cells had been injected into the candidate who now rose as from dogged sleep, to arrive huge and powerful at the tournament camps of New Hampshire and Iowa.

It's time to resist the lassitude by which we now seem bound. The GOP presidential contender should run not only against Clinton, but against the Clinton presidential model.

V-K Day?

NEW YORK, JUNE 4

THERE are a lot of loose ends, but President Clinton should take it and run.

What we don't know about Milosevic is everything, except that he is a liar. Clinton and he are, in that respect, made for each other. We don't know whether the bombing caused him to cave, insofar as he has done so. We don't know what were the pressures he felt from parliament (he actually has a parliament). Or what pressures he felt from the people and, finally, the army.

The estimate published in the *New York Times* on Friday opens fresh eyes on military ledgers. Seventy-two days of bombing resulted in the loss of 5,000 soldiers and 1,200 civilians.

On a good day in 1917–18 you had losses of 20,000 on the military front. The bombing of Dresden killed over 100,000 civilians. So we are invited to believe that Milosevic has surrendered because of his losses? Of course, we need to add to human losses—which affect Mr. Milosevic only insofar as they diminish his firepower—the loss of buildings and bridges. And most critical—some armchair strategists, like this pundit, said so way back—seems to have been the loss of electricity and water. The citizens of Belgrade don't like to be without electricity, which on Day 68 we got around to depriving them of by pummeling the electrical plants.

A temptation is to rewrite the doctrine that bombing doesn't ever succeed in stopping aggressors. Professor John Kenneth Galbraith recently reminded his vast constituency that he led an investigative team to Germany in 1945 to investigate the effect of our saturation bombing of three years on the German war machine. He told us that notwithstanding the thunder from the skies over Germany, when the Nazis surrendered their productive capacity was 30 percent up over the first of the year.

The reason we'd go slow in revising the bombing-doesn't-do-any-good doctrine is that we don't quite know what Milosevic is up to and can't safely conclude that he agreed—sort of—to the cease-fire terms because his own war machine had been stopped dead. There were no ground forces to contend with and he still had left tanks and infantrymen. Did he pull out because of the incremental bomb on Day 71?

Meanwhile, what Milosevic had accomplished was the despoliation of the Albanian parts of Kosovo. Approximately 90 percent of all ethnic Albanians have been uprooted from their homes in Kosovo: over 1 million people. The grand purpose of the war was to keep them from being disturbed. A derivative purpose of the war now becomes to bring them back, rebuild their homes and schoolhouses and places of worship and rekindle a few hundred local economies.

Will they come flocking home? Well, that depends in part on whether they have reason to believe that, once returned, they will be safe. To the end of protecting them from wayward armed Serbs, they will have the protection of 50,000 troops. Under what command? An interesting, perhaps a vital point: The Belgrade negotiators have insisted that the security forces fly the U.N. banner. The NATO people have held out for troops under NATO command. The Russian presence, if there is to be one, would benefit from U.N. sponsorship because that way, Moscow wouldn't have to pay the soldiers' salaries.

But at an operational level it is a dizzying challenge to work out who has a veto power over what. Could Russia—or China, for that matter—veto the prolongation of a U.N. security force?; or could we veto their veto?—round and round we go. How long would protection be needed? One estimate, by Gen. Brent Scowcroft a few weeks ago, was 40–50 years. One might as well view Yugoslavia as a permanent NATO military camp, like Fort Sam Houston.

What will the 35-year-old Kosovar bricklayer and his wife decide? To stick it out in Macedonia, or to try to emigrate elsewhere—or to go back to their scorched half-acre? We don't know. It will be a very long time before the shutter closes finally on the refugee scene.

But in terms of the hole we were in, at least we stopped digging. We have to assume that one of the provisions of the new understanding did not call on Milosevic's reporting for duty to the United Nations War Crimes Tribunal. So many little details like this one will sprout up. Having done so, let us hope they won't, down the line, gobble the whole mess up.

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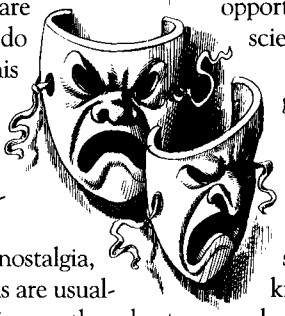
■ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ■

FLORENCE KING

ARE you sitting down? I ask because I'm getting ready to say something nice and I don't want you to sustain any injuries from crashing suddenly to the floor.

To get right to it, I love the post office. You heard me. The post office, officially known as the U.S. Postal Service, a name that has never caught on because "post office" triggers more positive associations than we know we have until we sit down and think about it. That's what I did recently when I got up at 4 A.M. and sat at the table drinking coffee, smoking, and staring into space. Writers are constantly asked "Where do you get your ideas?" and this is the answer: letting your mind roam free in the middle of the night until it brushes up against an unlikely subject.



As with any exercise in nostalgia, good post-office associations are usually found in those of a certain age, though this one holds out a possible exception: Children still seem to go through a stamp-collecting phase. Whether it will be enough to form a rich marrow of memory remains to be seen. Today's plethora of stamps, first-day covers, and gift shops in main branches may reduce the post office to just another mini-mall. That would be a tragedy because your true post-office aficionado is in the grip of a mystique.

The post office of my childhood was a Greek temple with institutional floors of a speckled black-and-brown pattern and high ceilings that drew heat and captured rising sounds, sending them back as a steady hum of humanity reminiscent of the bustling excitement of a train station.

The first thing you saw, whether you wanted to or not, was the New Deal mural painted by an unemployed artist under the Works Progress Administration. A huge panorama of workers and farmers with bulging muscles and noble brows, the mural was said to contain cryptic socialist messages passed to the artist by Eleanor Roosevelt, a rumor that gave Southern dowagers something to do while standing in line and led to cryptic stamp orders when they got up to the window and barked, "Twelve hammers and seven sickles!"

Another famous sight was the Rogues' Gallery of the FBI's most-wanted criminals. Post offices still display them but they stir no excitement in the era of *Unsolved Mysteries* and live interviews with the latest beneficiary of jury nullification. We pored over them because they were our only close-up look at big-time criminals, and they gave sweet little old ladies who wouldn't hurt a fly a golden opportunity to practice their favorite science: eugenics.

"You can see they don't have good blood," said Granny. "Look at those weak chins. Short necks, too—that's always a bad sign. And shifty eyes! Remember, always look people straight in the eye so they'll know you're honest. Except men, when you get older. Then it means something else. That's how they can tell."

"Tell what?"

"Never mind."

The post office of yore imparted a feeling of security that made no sense, but then feelings of security rarely do. Few today remember Postal Savings Accounts but to the Depression generation they were the one bank that could never fail. Many people, including my father, clung to them well into the Fifties because "The post office will always be there." Others, more bold, put most of their money in the bank but kept about $300 in Postal Savings "just in case."

The certificates added to the aura of substantiality by being bigger and fancier than paper money, which appealed to that squirrely instinct of children to have something they can take out and look at. I had my own little account, and would have one now if they still existed because, you see, Banks Are Bad But The Post Office Is Good. This is the sort of New Deal-planted idée fixe that small-government conservatives keep running up against, but even the gruffest of them make an exception for the post office in their favorite maxim: "The federal government has only three duties: print the money, deliver the mail, and declare war."

It is no accident that the title character in Kevin Costner's *The Postman* is the allegorical savior of a ravaged, post-revolutionary America. The movie flopped because it was confused and poorly written but the concept was on target. We harbor a subconscious postal patriotism that is tied up with Ben Franklin, the Pony Express, and the idealistic good-guyness contained in the motto: "Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds." That these words were written by Herodotus in the fifth century B.C. makes the post office more of a "traditional value" than much else that we have.

THE postman and the FBI agent are the only two government employees to figure regularly in movies, but while the G-man is the admirable star, the postman is the lovable bit player—the comic relief, the separated lovers' Cupid, the sympathetic messenger of the gods bearing the letter edged in black, a bit of human contact for lonely Shirley Booth in *Come Back, Little Sheba*. And if the movie is very old he sports a badge of office certain to set off a childhood obsession. Kids still crave the fireman's hat and the cop's billy but in my day we also would have killed for the postman's leather shoulder bag.

The place of the post office in American psychology is what lies behind the Luddite hatred of faxes and e-mail, which, we are told, "will never replace the letter." That's nonsense; I save my faxes and print out my e-mail because they *are* letters. The loss mourned by the Luddites, who are often right-wing anarchists, is the still-powerful concept of "the U.S. mail." The phrase was too long a symbol of stability to be completely powerless now; sending obscenity through "the mail" or using "the mail" to defraud was worse than doing it in person, and on a subconscious level we still think so.

We may succeed in privatizing Social Security, but I predict that any attempt to privatize the post office will rouse American ire as neither Whitewater, nor Chinagate, nor Kosovo, nor Monica by night had the power to do. **NR**

Miss King can be reached at P. O. Box 7113, Fredericksburg, Va. 22404.

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